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Curriculum Innovation in the Primary EFL
classroom: Case studies of three teachers
implementing Hong Kong's Target-Oriented
Curriculum (TOC)

By

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Any remaining shortcomings in the thesis are, of course, entirely the responsibility of the author.

Declaration and inclusion of published work

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own original work and has not been submitted for any higher degree in another university.

The papers listed below were written and published during the period of the preparation of the thesis. Content from these papers has been adapted for use in the thesis.

Carless, D. (1997). Managing systemic curriculum change: A critical analysis of Hong Kong's Target-Oriented Curriculum initiative. *International Review of Education*, 43(4), 349-366.

Extracts from this paper have been adapted and updated for use in chapters 2 and 3 of the thesis.

Carless, D. (1998). A case study of curriculum implementation in Hong Kong. *System* 26(3), 353-368.

Extracts from this paper have been adapted and updated for use in chapters 5-7 of the thesis with respect to the discussion of teacher C.

Carless, D. (1999a). Factors affecting classroom implementation: Task-based curriculum renewal in Hong Kong. *International journal of educational reform*, 8(4), 374-382.

Material from this paper has been adapted for use in chapters 2 and 3.

Carless, D. (1999b). Catering for individual learner differences: Primary school teachers' voices. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 15-39.

This paper is, to a large extent, based on the discussion reproduced in 7.4.

Carless, D. (1999c). Perspectives on the cultural appropriacy of Hong Kong's Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC) initiative. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 12(3), 238-254.

This paper is, to a large extent, based on sections 2.8.8 and 8.5.

Carless, D. & Wong, P.M. (2000). Teaching English to Young Learners in Hong Kong. In M. Nikolov & H. Curtain (Eds.), *An early start: Young learners and modern languages in Europe and beyond*. European Council for Modern Languages: Graz, Austria.

Material from this paper, with myself as lead author, has been extensively adapted for use in chapter 3.

Abstract

The central focus of this study is to explore how three primary school teachers were implementing Hong Kong's Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC) in their lower primary English classrooms. TOC is a task-based, process-oriented innovation, introduced from 1995 onwards.

The study involved a case study approach by which teachers' perceptions and behaviours were analysed during the period of a single academic year. Data collection methods for the study comprised mainly classroom observation and interviews. The former involved the study of five or six consecutive English lessons for each teacher in three separate cycles, the latter involved six semi-structured interviews per teacher. The emphasis was on qualitative data and analysis, although quantitative classroom and attitude scale data were also collected.

The main findings from the study were as follows. Teacher A was positively oriented towards TOC, had a sound understanding and was implementing TOC principles to a high degree. Teacher B was somewhat neutrally disposed towards the innovation, was only in the process of developing an understanding of it, and was not implementing it as much as teacher A. Teacher C was very positively oriented towards TOC, had a sound understanding of its principles but was only able to implement it to a similar extent to teacher B.

The main significance of the study includes: insights into research methodology derived from the execution of the study; confirmation and development of the theory of the management of change; insights into the classroom implementation of the key TOC classroom principles, task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences; and implications on the cultural appropriateness of TOC for the Hong Kong context.

Abbreviations

AA	Activity Approach
AAT	Academic Aptitude Test
CBAM	Concerns Based Adoption Model
CDI	Curriculum Development Institute
CHC	Confucian Heritage Cultures
COLT	Communicative Orientation to Language Teaching
EC	Education Commission
ECR	Education Commission Report
ED	Education Department
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
HKBLDF	Hong Kong Bank Language Development Fund
HKEA	Hong Kong Examinations Authority
HKIEd	Hong Kong Institute of Education
ILE	Institute of Language in Education
IT	Information Technology
P1, P2 etc.	Primary One, Primary Two etc.
PRC	People's Republic of China
R, D and D	Research, Development and Diffusion
RQ	Research Question
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TOC	Target-Oriented Curriculum
TTRA	Targets and Target-Related Assessment

Abbreviations for quotations:

R = Researcher

T = Teacher

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of chapter

This chapter summarises the rationale for the study, which focuses on the classroom implementation in Hong Kong primary schools of an educational innovation. It outlines the main principles of this innovation, named the Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC), a multi-faceted cross-curricular process-orientated innovation. It outlines the main aim of the study to explore how three teachers were implementing TOC in their P1 (primary 1, pupils aged around six years old) or P2 (primary 2, pupils aged around seven years old) classes and summarises the research methodology for the study, which involved mainly qualitative methods, predominantly classroom observation and interviewing. The significance of the study is then outlined and the chapter concludes by outlining the organisation of the thesis.

1.2 Rationale for the study

As Fullan (1991a) points out, the consequences of planned educational change have been disappointing in terms of the lack of improvements which have resulted. Cuban (1988) points out how little impact reform has had on what goes on in classrooms, with the rhetoric of innovation failing to result in change in what teachers actually do in the classroom. Change models and strategies that seemed to have been largely ineffective are reused again and again with similarly discouraging results (Cuban, 1990; Sarason, 1990).

The reasons for the failure of much educational reform are complex and varied. I show in chapter 2 that one of the principal reasons for the disappointing outcomes of educational reform is the failure to cater for the teacher and school perspective. Fullan (1991a) states the centrality of the teacher role succinctly as follows, “Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it’s as simple and complex as that” (p.117). Given this crucial role of the teacher, educational researchers, change agents and teacher educators need to know more about what teachers do in the classroom when charged with implementing a curriculum reform, what the rationales for their actions are, on what bases they resist or accept innovations, the extent to which they themselves change as teachers and why.

Following from this, the thesis focuses on classroom observation over the period of one school year, exploring how the teachers carried out the innovation in their own classrooms. Interview data enabled the teachers’ voices to be heard, for example, in expressing the rationale for what they were doing and their own perceptions on what was occurring in their lessons. In order to provide a detailed account of their classrooms, a case study approach was adopted whereby three teachers in different schools were observed. The rationale for the case study approach is described in 4.3.

1.3 Summary of TOC

The innovation which is the focus of the study is the Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC), a reform developed for Hong Kong primary schools in the early 1990s for the three main subjects of Chinese, Mathematics and English. It was adopted by most primary schools

from September 1995 or September 1996 onwards. The classroom observation for my research was carried out in the 1996-7 academic year. The principles of TOC are analysed in 3.6 and summarised below, based on Carless (1999a). TOC is based on a constructivist view of learning (see 3.6.1). Its main general intentions for the Hong Kong primary school are:

- the development of specific learning targets to provide a clear direction for learning
- the use of learning tasks to promote ‘learning by doing’ and to involve pupils in five so-called ‘fundamental intertwining ways of learning’, communication, conceptualisation, inquiry, reasoning and problem-solving
- catering for individual learner differences so as to adapt teaching and learning to different pupil abilities and learning styles
- task-based assessment as part of an integrated teaching, learning and assessment cycle
- a greater emphasis on formative rather than summative assessment
- criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced assessment
- improved recording and reporting to parents of pupil progress.

With respect to ELT, TOC has much in common with process-orientated, communicative or task-based approaches, as argued in 3.8. In the Hong Kong language classroom, this has generally been interpreted as a weak form of communicative approaches, in which a presentation-practice-production approach is used predominantly and learning tasks characteristically occur in the production stage of this sequence.

1.4 Aims of study

The central focus of the study (further explored in chapter 4) was to explore how three teachers in different schools were implementing (or not implementing) TOC in their P1 and P2 classrooms and to analyse these teachers' perceptions of issues emerging from their experiences in carrying out the innovation. As such, the study is exploratory and aims to contribute to the verification and development of theories of the implementation of educational change through its analysis of the curriculum innovation TOC. The specific objectives of the study are:

- to explore teachers' attitudes and understandings of TOC-related issues
- to investigate the extent to which the principles of TOC are actually being implemented in the classes observed
- to explore the strategies which teachers are using to implement or interpret TOC
- to analyse the implications of TOC implementation for the management of change.

1.5 Overview of research methodology

The research methodology is described in chapter 4, here it is summarised based on Carless (1999b). The study involved case studies of three English teachers, in different schools, implementing TOC over a seven month period in their own P1 or P2 classrooms, with pupils aged six to seven years old. Case studies characteristically enable information to be collected from multiple data sources and over a period of time. For this study, the case approach permitted an in-depth look at a small number of classrooms, so facilitating the development of an understanding of TOC from the teachers' viewpoints.

For example, it was possible to probe what the teachers were doing in the classroom and why, and to relate this to their attitudes towards teaching, learning and TOC.

Data collection methods used for the study comprised classroom observation, focused interviews and an attitude scale. Classroom observations were conducted for five or six consecutive English lessons for each teacher in three separate cycles during the school year, totalling seventeen audio-taped observations per teacher. Both quantitative data in terms of a tailor-made classroom observation schedule and qualitative data in terms of lesson transcriptions and field notes were collected. Lessons which indicated the highest degree of implementation of TOC features were selected for transcription.

A series of six semi-structured interviews, lasting between forty minutes and one hour, were conducted with each of the three teachers. A baseline interview, prior to the commencement of classroom observation, collected relevant background information about the teacher and the school. Post-observation interviews, carried out at the end of each cycle of observations, focused primarily on the lessons that had just been observed. Summative interviews were conducted in order to probe into some of the main issues, arising from the classroom observations and the ongoing data analysis. Post-analysis interviews were carried out once the data analysis had been almost completed to facilitate member checking (see 4.3.3). All interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

A five-point Likert attitude scale was developed to measure the orientation of respondents to ELT and TOC. Half of the items in the scale implied a broadly positive orientation towards TOC and related principles, half of the items indicated a broadly negative orientation. An overall orientation towards TOC, as reflected by responses on this attitude scale, was computed by scoring strong agreement with a positive item as five, down to one for strong disagreement and strong agreement with a negative item one, up to five for strong disagreement. The higher the total, the more positive orientation towards TOC as measured by the scale. The attitude scale was administered to the case study teachers prior to the classroom observation period and again seven months later at its conclusion. It was also administered to a wider sample of seventy primary school English teachers in order to gauge the extent to which the attitudes of the three case study teachers reflected those of the wider target population.

Data analysis of the qualitative data from the study was carried out by coding and then categorising the data according to themes. Data was then compared across cycles and across teachers according to the principles of inductive analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Reasoned judgements enabled conclusions to be drawn which were then further verified or disproved by an iterative process of moving between the data and the findings. Extracts from interviews are used in chapters 5-7 to provide supporting evidence for the findings and permit the teachers' voices to be heard directly.

1.6 Significance of the study

The main significance of the study is discussed in 9.3 and includes: insights into research methodology derived from the design of the study; confirmation and development of the theory of the management of change; insights into the classroom implementation of the key TOC classroom principles, task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences; implications on the cultural appropriateness of TOC for the Hong Kong context.

1.7 Overview of the thesis

This chapter has briefly outlined the rationale, aims and research methodology for the study. It has also introduced the innovation TOC and pointed to the significance of the study. The remainder of the thesis is organised into eight further chapters. Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature on curriculum innovation and analyses the main factors affecting the implementation of educational innovations. Chapter 3 argues that contextual factors are crucial to the implementation of innovations and so explores the Hong Kong primary school context into which TOC has been introduced. It also identifies a number of characteristics of educational reform in Hong Kong and outlines how they impacted on perceptions and attitudes towards TOC. Chapter 4 establishes the research methodology for the study and places the thesis predominantly within the qualitative paradigm. Chapter 5 is the first of three chapters related to the findings of the study. It explores the attitude, perceptions and understandings of the three respondents for the study as they relate to the implementation of TOC. Chapter 6 examines the extent of implementation of TOC for the three teachers participating in this study. Chapter 7

analyses how the teachers implemented task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences, the two key classroom principles of TOC. Extracts from classroom transcripts are used in order to exemplify the points being made. Chapter 8 brings together and reconciles some of the main findings from the three previous chapters. It also analyses the cultural appropriateness of TOC and contains reflections on the research methodology used for the study. Chapter 9 summarises the perspectives on the research questions for the study, discusses the significance of the study and its limitations and also outlines some avenues for further research.

CHAPTER 2. THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM INNOVATIONS

2.1 Scope of chapter

This chapter aims to place the innovation TOC within a theoretical context by reviewing selected research on the management of change. It does not attempt to be comprehensive but aims to discuss those aspects in the literature which seem most relevant to this thesis. After some introductory comments on innovation and change, the chapter discusses selected models and strategies for curriculum implementation. I move on to argue that such idealised models are limited in capturing the complexities and paradoxes of the process of educational change as discussed by Fullan (1991a, 1993, 1999). The chapter then describes and discusses three case studies of innovations in different contexts, selected for the insights which they can bring to TOC implementation in Hong Kong. I examine a communicative curriculum for Greek schools which is indicative of the challenges facing curriculum implementation, an Egyptian innovation in which cultural issues are prominent and a small-scale process writing innovation in six Hong Kong secondary schools.

I continue by analysing a number of factors that have been seen to have particular impact on the implementation or non-implementation of curriculum innovations. The principal purpose of this review is to identify variables which affect the change process and can be applied to the TOC innovation in Hong Kong. I draw, where relevant, on a number of studies both in general education and more specifically in ELT. It is argued that it has been common for curriculum developers to devote too much time to planning and design

issues with too little attention as to how and whether the proposed innovation is actually implemented in the classroom (Markee, 1992). The chapter concludes by summarising the main points and by indicating what specific issues are addressed in the study.

2.2 Innovation and change

This sub-section examines the two interrelated terms, innovation and change, and outlines briefly different kinds of change. A number of writers e.g. Fullan (1991a); Hurst (1983); Kennedy (1988); Markee, (1997) use innovation and change interchangeably. Other writers distinguish between the two terms. White (1988) defines change as any alteration between one time and another; change can therefore arise spontaneously and does not necessarily involve conscious planning or intention. White (*ibid*) contrasts this with innovation which involves *deliberate* alteration (his emphasis). In other words, for White, intention is a crucial distinguishing feature of innovation as opposed to change, which may be unintentional. Miles (1964) also stresses the deliberate nature of innovation by defining it as “a deliberate, novel specific change” (p. 14). With respect to newness, Rogers (1983) emphasises the *perception* of the innovation as being new, whether the innovation is *actually* new or not is less significant. I acknowledge that innovation is more consciously intentioned than change and that newness is an aspect of innovation but not necessarily of change. In this thesis, however, innovation and change will be used interchangeably for the following reasons. Firstly, on the grounds that it is the common practice. Secondly, the issue of whether a teaching approach is an innovation or a change is often a personal decision and so tends to vary amongst teachers. As I show in chapter 5, for the teachers in this study some elements of TOC were

‘innovative’, whilst others were minor adaptations to their previous practices. As Markee (1997) also points out, the response of adopters of an innovation (or the extent to which it is perceived as an innovation or a change) only emerges after a period of implementation. Thirdly, the alternation of the terms innovation and change may permit some stylistic variation and thereby avoid monotonous repetition of the same term. For the purpose of this thesis, I adopt Markee’s (1997) definition of curriculum innovation as “a managed process of development whose principal products are teaching (and/or testing) materials, methodological skills, and pedagogical values that are perceived as new by potential adopters (p.46)”. This definition is used as it encompasses key areas of change of particular relevance to TOC; it considers the process of the management of change, new teaching materials, new classroom methodologies and new values (or attitudes).

2.3 Scale of change

A number of writers (e.g. Cuban 1992; Dalin, 1994) distinguish between fundamental or major changes and incremental or minor ones. The former are motivated by major dissatisfaction with present arrangements and aim to transform systems or organisational cultures. The latter aim to enhance the existing system without disturbing basic organisational features. In the literature, there are different viewpoints on the advisability of these two types of change and the feasibility of minor or major change may depend on contextual factors, such as the needs and stage of development of the host environment. Some writers argue for small-scale incremental change, (e.g. Bailey, 1992; Hurst, 1983; Kennedy, 1987) on the grounds that it is more feasible and acknowledges the challenges involved in attempting to transform teacher attitudes. Other writers (e.g. Berman &

McLaughlin, 1977; Fullan, 1991a) argue that whilst a fundamental change may be harder to implement smoothly, it results in greater change because more is being attempted. Similarly, Dalin (1994) recommends, “Think systemic and big” (p.252), implying that a vision of reform which affects school life substantially will have more impact than a cautious, incremental approach. An intermediate stance is represented by Stoller (1994), who identified teacher support for innovations which are neither too similar nor too different to the existing status quo. In other words, she indicates that an innovation should not be so similar that it appears trivial or not worth the effort, but not so radically different that it is incompatible with existing practices.

Pennington (1994) argues that the Hong Kong mindset encourages adoption of new ideas on condition that they do not represent deep changes in beliefs and that they have become widely accepted in the community. She suggests that innovations which required deep changes are not likely to be implemented in Hong Kong as follows:

According to the Hong Kong norm, innovations which are additive and superficial (i.e. which merely add to the available possibilities or change only surface characteristics) are more likely to be adopted than those which are replacive and substantial (i.e. which replace some existing deep characteristics). (Pennington, *ibid*, p.145)

This seems to be commensurate with the small-scale notions on change outlined above. The implications for TOC seem to be that it is unlikely to be implemented fully because as indicated in 2.8.1, TOC was intended as a radical change. Fullan (1991a) suggests that the answer to the small-scale – large-scale conundrum is to break ambitious changes into smaller components and implement them in a divisible manner. I discuss the teachers’ views on this issue in 5.4.2 and the implications for TOC in 8.3.

2.4 Curriculum implementation

2.4.1 Stages of innovations

Before proceeding to discuss some relevant models of change, I summarise some theoretical aspects of curriculum implementation of relevance to the current thesis. Firstly, I define curriculum implementation and relate it to other stages in the innovation process. Fullan (1991a) distinguishes between three stages of the innovation process, namely adoption, implementation and institutionalisation, although in practice of course, there is overlap between the stages rather than linear progression (Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1994). *Adoption* refers to the decision to proceed with an innovation, for example, this may be a legislative enactment by a government or ministry or an announcement by a school principal. *Implementation* refers to the process of carrying out an innovation in practice. An innovation may be implemented faithfully according to the conception of its proponents; it may be adapted during the course of implementation; or in many cases innovations are not implemented at all. In practice, many changes are adopted but never implemented (Fullan, 1991a). *Institutionalisation* refers to the innovation establishing itself as a normal practice of teachers and schools. This may happen over varying lengths of time or never take place at all if the innovation is not widely accepted or is abandoned and replaced by something else. These distinctions are particularly relevant to the present study, for as I show in 3.4.4, it has been common in Hong Kong for innovations to be adopted in name but not implemented, whilst in 8.3.1, I indicate that due to the short life-cycle of innovations in Hong Kong, they rarely seem to become institutionalised.

2.4.2 *Models of change*

I now analyse three approaches to curriculum implementation of particular relevance to this thesis. Firstly, I explore a fidelity perspective, then discuss the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) which draws on the fidelity model and describes individuals' perceptions, feelings and motivations as they progress through different stages of implementation (Hall & Loucks, 1978). Thirdly, I look at a mutual adaptation perspective which takes a different stance to the fidelity models.

A fidelity perspective, a static and idealised model of change, focuses on the extent to which a particular innovation is implemented in accordance with the intentions of its developers and assumes that this is the desired outcome of curriculum change (Snyder, Bolin & Zumwalt, 1992). Fidelity was the dominant perspective of mainly quantitative curriculum implementation research during the 1970s (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977). The assumptions of this model are that change is predominantly a linear process in which teachers carry out what has been developed and planned, but as I indicate in 2.5, these assumptions have been found to be inadequate. A fidelity perspective is also concerned with identifying the factors which facilitate or hinder implementation i.e. the variables which impact on faithful implementation.

An empirically grounded theoretical model involving a fidelity perspective is CBAM, developed at the University of Texas (Hall & Hord, 1987; Hall & Loucks, 1978) and reported recently in Hopkins (1990), Van Den Berg (1993) and Van Den Berg, Vandenberghe & Slegers (1999). Anderson (1997) claims that CBAM is one of the

most significant and widely applied models of educational change to arise from research on innovation adoption and implementation. CBAM is built upon the following assumptions about classroom change (Hall & Hord, *op cit*):

- change is a process not an event
- change is carried out by individuals and is a highly personal experience
- change involves developmental growth in knowledge, skills and attitudes.

CBAM is of relevance to the current thesis in that it looks at how individuals respond to innovation over time and identifies the personal nature of change. One of the main elements of CBAM is a Levels of Use (LoU) framework which focuses on patterns of teacher behaviour in response to an innovation. This aspect is relevant here in that the current study also aims to ascertain how the teachers are responding to the TOC innovation. Although my study does not explicitly utilise CBAM procedures, 6.3.4 discusses the stages of the respective development of the three teachers with reference to the developmental stages in the LoU framework which are now outlined below:

Level 0 - NON-USE - a teacher has no knowledge of the change and no plans for implementation;

Level 1 - ORIENTATION - a teacher is seeking more information about the innovation but has not made a decision to implement it;

Level 2 - PREPARATION - a teacher is actively preparing to put the change into practice, but has not actually begun to implement it;

Level 3 - MECHANICAL - a teacher has begun implementation and is struggling to make the innovation more manageable and easy to implement; modifications to the innovation tend to be teacher centred;

Level 4A - ROUTINE USE - a teacher has established a pattern of regular use of the innovation and is making few changes and adaptations to it;

Level 4B - REFINEMENT - a teacher is actively assessing the impact of the innovation on her students and initiating changes on that basis; modifications to the innovation tend to be learner centred;

Level 5 - INTEGRATION - a teacher collaborates with other teachers to make changes in implementation at the school, rather than the individual classroom level;

Level 6 - RENEWAL - teachers feel the need to make a major change in the innovation and/or to explore alternative practices.

In view of the impracticality of extensive field work (Hall & Hord, 1987), LoU is usually identified via a focused interview which Anderson (1997) estimates as lasting thirty to forty minutes. I briefly critique these procedures in 8.4.

In contrast to fidelity approaches, implementation studies conducted during the 1970s and 1980s indicated that “those who were to use the curriculum insisted on shaping it in ways that suited their own purposes” (Snyder *et al.*, 1992, p. 411). Change was seen not as a linear and mechanical event but a recursive process of negotiation, experimentation and adaptation. From this perspective a *mutual adaptation* approach was defined as “that process whereby adjustments in a curriculum are made by curriculum developers and those who actually use it in the school or classroom context” (Snyder *et al.*, *ibid*, p. 410). This approach assumes that the exact nature of implementation cannot and should not be specified precisely in advance but should evolve as teachers decide what is best for their classroom context (Fullan, 1991b). My interpretation of the literature is that this

adaptation process should preferably be built into the curriculum development process. However, as Snyder *et al.*, (*op cit*) observe, in practice adaptation is often a reluctant concession to reality by change agents, rather than a deliberate commitment to the mutual adaptation perspective. I indicate in 8.4 that this appeared to be the case for TOC, as adaptation was mainly a response to resistance from schools.

Berman (1981) suggests that fidelity approaches tend to be appropriate in certain circumstances (clear agreed aims, fully worked out innovations, minor changes), whilst mutual adaptation approaches would be more suitable in the opposite circumstances (contested aims, partially worked out innovation, major changes). Clearly, there are different points on the fidelity-adaptation continuum. Minor adaptations would be close to fidelity, more major adaptations would be when teachers use the external idea but transform it significantly. When implementers transform the idea so that it becomes completely unrecognisable then the adaptation is not mutual (Fullan, 1991b). As TOC is a major change, this implies that a mutual adaptation approach would be more suitable and I discuss in 3.8 the extent of fidelity/mutual adaptation for TOC and draw out some implications in 8.4.

My thesis is influenced by both fidelity and mutual adaptation perspectives on implementation. In the case of the former, RQ3 (see 4.4) aimed to identify the extent to which the teachers were implementing TOC faithfully. For the latter, mutual adaptation perspectives influenced research questions relating to the relationship between attitudes and TOC implementation, the strategies that the case study teachers were using to

implement TOC and their rationale for these strategies in that one could infer how and why the teachers had adapted the innovation to suit their own views and experience.

2.5 Change processes and complexities

Marsh (1997) points out that recent writings on change have moved away from models such as those discussed above. The main weaknesses of such models seem to be that they do not adequately cater for the non-linearity, complexity and chaos in change, features brought out, for example, in Fullan's major writings on educational change (1991a, 1993, 1999). I extract from Fullan (1993, 1999) a number of 'lessons' which seem most relevant to the current study and are discussed elsewhere in the thesis.

Three lessons from Fullan (1993) are highlighted. Firstly, "You can't mandate what matters (The more complex the change the less you can force it)" resonates with the discussion in 3.4.2. Secondly, "Change is a journey not a blueprint" relates to the discussion in 2.4.2 and 6.3.4. Thirdly, "Neither centralisation nor decentralisation works (Both top-down and bottom-up strategies are necessary)" is discussed in relationship to ownership in 2.8.2.

Two lessons from Fullan (1999), seem particularly relevant to the thesis. Firstly, "Attack incoherence" relates to the analysis in 3.4.4 and 8.3.1 which highlights the failure in educational reform in Hong Kong to integrate or make connections between different innovations. "Theories of change and theories of education need each other" provides support for the focus in this thesis on both issues in the management of change e.g. the

factors affecting the implementation of innovations (2.8) and the key features of TOC in the classroom as discussed in chapter 7.

2.6 Characteristics of innovations

Following from 2.5 above, Marsh (1997) describes the lessons outlined in Fullan (1993) as espousing a process-oriented model with an emphasis on individual and organisational variables. I now identify a number of such variables which can facilitate implementation by discussing characteristics of innovations which impact on organisational change.

I discuss below, based on Rogers (1995), five key attributes of innovations: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability. Markee (1997) defines these as core characteristics which influence all users' decisions to adapt or reject any kind of innovation. *Relative advantage* is the degree to which an innovation is perceived to be superior to the one that it supersedes. Relative advantage may be in terms of efficiency, prestige, convenience or satisfaction. The greater the perceived relative advantage of an innovation, the more rapid its adoption will be. *Compatibility* is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being compatible with the existing values, attitudes and beliefs of potential adopters. This relates to the issue of radical or incremental changes discussed in 2.3. The adoption of an incompatible innovation may require the development of a new attitude system, which as I show in 2.8.3 is often a slow or unachievable process. An innovation which is compatible with existing beliefs is generally likely to be implemented more quickly than one that is incompatible. *Complexity* is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and to use. Innovations that are simpler to understand are adopted more readily than

those that require the adopter to develop new understandings. *Trialability* is the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis. New ideas that can be adopted partially on a trial basis are generally introduced more quickly than innovations which are not divisible. An innovation that is trialable represents less uncertainty to individuals because they are able to learn through the initial experimentation. *Observability* is the degree to which an innovation is visible to others. The easier it is for teachers to see the results of an innovation, particularly if these are positive, the more likely they are to adopt it. Innovations which are perceived by individuals as having greater relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, observability and less complexity are likely to be adopted more rapidly than other innovations. I relate these characteristics to TOC in 3.8. The attributes summarised above are by no means exhaustive but seek to indicate the main organisational characteristics which can facilitate acceptance and implementation of innovations. The discussion does not however, help us to understand why an innovation may be implemented by some teachers but not by others. Classroom observation and interview data, as used in this research, facilitate probing more deeply into individual responses to the change process.

The discussion so far in this chapter has established the centrality of curriculum implementation (as opposed to adoption), and the importance of studying how innovations are actually carried out in the classroom. Whilst acknowledging the complexities of change, three models of implementation have been discussed, a fidelity perspective, the CBAM framework and mutual adaptation orientations. In order to provide exemplification of these models and present a backdrop for the subsequent

discussion of factors affecting the implementation of educational innovations, I now discuss empirical findings related to three EFL educational changes.

2.7 Innovation cases in EFL

The criteria for the selection of these innovations include: a variety of contextual backgrounds; different change models employed; varying degrees of implementation; depth of insights; and potential relevance to TOC in Hong Kong. The three cases selected for discussion are an EFL innovation in Greek Secondary Schools (Karavas, 1993; Karavas-Doukas, 1995, 1996, 1998), a project in Egypt (Holliday, 1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1994) and a small-scale process writing project with Hong Kong secondary school teachers (Cheung, M. 1996, 1999; Cheung & Pennington, 1994; Pennington & Cheung, 1995; Pennington, 1995, 1996a, 1996b).

2.7.1 Communicative EFL in Greece

This case is chosen because it represents many of the typical problems which face the implementation of an innovation and shares a number of characteristics with TOC in Hong Kong. Firstly, it is an innovation to be introduced into schools (albeit secondary rather than primary). Secondly, it concerns the promotion of a communicative approach, sharing similar characteristics to the task-based approach proposed for TOC (see 3.8). Thirdly, there are some contextual features shared by both the Greek and Hong Kong contexts, e.g. teacher-centred, exam-oriented.

The doctoral thesis carried out by Karavas (1993) and also reported in Karavas-Doukas (1995, 1996, 1998) aimed at evaluating the degree of implementation of a communicative

learner-centred EFL curriculum in Greek public secondary schools. The innovation, developed along R, D and D¹ lines was linked with the provision of new locally produced textbooks to replace the previous materials from British and North American sources. It was intended that the teacher role would move away from a teacher-centred transmission of grammatical knowledge towards a role as facilitator. The innovation hoped to encourage experiential learning and learner-centredness. In other words, the general principles of this project shared some similarities with the TOC concepts discussed in 3.6.

Classroom observation was an important aspect of the research (Karavas-Doukas, 1996). It focused principally on the roles that teachers performed in the classroom, which were identified as a key factor in the implementation of communicative approaches. The observation schedule included both low-inference categories, similar to those used in COLT (Communicative orientation to language teaching), (see also 4.5.2), and high-inference categories related to the teacher role. Teachers' reactions to the innovation and their perceptions of their classroom behaviour were elicited through questionnaires and interviews. An attitude scale was used to explore the respondents' approach to teaching and learning, and their opinions on communicative methods. This research design, involving classroom observation, interview data and an attitude scale has strongly influenced the current study. As discussed in 4.5, one of the strengths of the current study (not present in Karavas, 1993) is that classroom observation for the current thesis was of a longitudinal nature and that the case study design permitted an in-depth perspective on a small group of teachers.

The main findings from Karavas' classroom observations were that teachers were not implementing the intended communicative approach, instead they were using eclectic methods including audio-lingual, grammar-based and some, but not widespread, use of communicative methods. Teachers viewed the new textbooks as incompatible with their existing teaching styles, in other words they interpreted the innovation as a fundamental change (cf. 2.3). They tended to circumvent the intended communicative features of textbook activities by carrying them out as controlled grammar practice or reading comprehension exercises, in accordance with their preferred teaching approaches. In other words, a process of adaptation was apparent but in such a way as to undermine the intentions of the innovation so in terms of 2.4, the adaptation was not really 'mutual' (see also 8.4).

Karavas-Doukas' findings also indicated that teachers had a limited understanding of the new approach. This was due in large part to the lack of in-service training to prepare teachers in the demands and requirements of the new textbooks and the failure to support teachers adequately in schools in the implementation phase. The schools also faced constraints, including insufficient teaching time and lack of resources e.g. good photocopying facilities. Given these limitations it is not surprising that teachers tended to have unfavourable attitudes towards the innovation. The main reasons for their negative attitudes seemed to be as follows. Firstly, the incompatibility of the new textbooks with their existing approaches and their personal beliefs about teaching and learning provoked negative sentiments amongst the teachers. Secondly, teachers seemed to resent the

increased workload necessitated by using a new textbook with which they were unfamiliar and had not been trained to use. In other words, the innovation was viewed as being low on relative advantage and compatibility (cf. 2.6).

Overall, the innovation was not being implemented as intended, in other words in terms of a fidelity perspective, the outcomes were negative. Interestingly, however, Karavas-Doukas (1998) reports that most of the teachers *perceived* that they were carrying out the innovation. This underscores the importance of classroom observation in the study of curriculum implementation and provides further empirical evidence in support of RQs 3 and 4 in 4.4. Karavas-Doukas (1995) suggests two main factors which appeared to be significant in the non-implementation of the innovation. Firstly, despite the fact that the new textbooks were prepared by local Greek curriculum developers, the innovation did not sufficiently take into account the culture of the local educational context. There was a mismatch between the communicative ideas in the proposed curriculum and the teacher-centred grammar-based pedagogy that was favoured by teachers (and apparently also by pupils). As persuasively argued by Holliday (1994), innovations need to be adapted so that they are culturally suited to the context in which they are being implemented (see also 2.7.2, 2.8.8).

The second important factor affecting the unsuccessful implementation of the innovation related to poor communication channels, a common problem when predominantly one-way R, D and D channels are used. As Karavas-Doukas (1995) explains, there was a lack of communication between the different parties in the innovation process, such as,

curriculum developers, advisers, teacher trainers and teachers. Teachers also did not receive sufficient support during the implementation stage. Thus, it is not surprising that teachers were unable to cope with the demands of the innovation and that it was not implemented successfully at the time of Karavas' study.

Karavas-Doukas' work informs the current study in four main ways. Firstly, it provides further evidence of the difficulties in changing teacher beliefs from 'traditional' practices towards communicative ones. Secondly, by use of classroom observation it demonstrates mismatches between what teachers report or perceive they are doing and what actually goes on in the classroom. For the current study, I explore in 6.3 the extent to which teacher perceptions of implementation match with their observed classroom behaviour. Thirdly, it shows how the culture of the classroom has a significant impact on the likelihood of an innovation being implemented faithfully. Fourthly, it provides an illustration of some of the main factors affecting the implementation of innovations, e.g. teacher attitudes, teacher training, resources, communication which I explore further in 2.8.

2.7.2 Project work in Egypt

Holliday's work in Egypt is introduced as a relevant study because it analyses the topic of the cultural issues underlying what goes on in the classroom and the difficulties of importing technologies. This issue of the cultural appropriateness of imported curricula is of particular relevance to TOC in Hong Kong, (2.8.8, 5.5, 8.5). Holliday (1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1994) reports on a project based at an Egyptian university. The aim of this project

which ran from 1985 to 1990, was to develop spoken English, reading and writing for third and fourth year undergraduate trainee teachers in Egyptian faculties of education. The team for this project included British advisers and American Fulbright scholars, working with Egyptian counterparts. At the beginning of the project the intention was to develop materials via collaboration between expatriates and local staff, continuing a tradition of course development through committee work at the university. It was believed that the development of materials, which would eventually be made into textbooks, would help to ensure a degree of permanence to the change process (Holliday, 1991).

In terms of method, Holliday collected data on the progress of the project, mainly from classroom observations of both local and expatriate lecturers, carried out on an opportunistic basis. During the first three years of the project Holliday observed forty classes at different sites involving twenty seven different groups of students. Holliday (1991) characterises the observation, and the associated field notes, as ethnographic in that they focused on the behaviour of local lecturers and students, within the cultural artefact of the classroom. The observations were open-ended and unstructured in that categories were allowed to emerge as the observation proceeded. Evidence was sought particularly on how lecturers and students were reacting to the new materials used in the project and what constraints or facilitative strategies affected their use. At a wider level, a major issue was the extent to which the approach prompted by the new materials was congruent with the norms of the Egyptian university classroom culture.

The findings from Holliday's ethnographic observations revealed that the development of new materials was not leading to significant changes in the classroom, due to a number of complex and 'hidden' contextual factors. This prompted a change of emphasis in the project towards staff development rather than materials development. Local lecturers, who had recently completed their doctorates, were involved in small-scale action research projects at the classroom level, which enabled them to gain further practical classroom-based research experience. Motivation for such staff development programmes was achieved through financial support and by incorporating into the programme, the writing of an academic paper so as to satisfy local professional-academic needs. Outcomes of the staff development programme seemed to be positive, as reported in Holliday (1991).

I would characterise this approach as being in line with a mutual adaptation model of curriculum implementation (2.4). Rather than adhering faithfully to the original plans of the project, a switch was facilitated in line with local cultural protocols. In contrast to the Greek innovation above, where adaptation served mainly to undermine the innovation, in the Egyptian case the adaptation influenced by ethnographic observation seemed to reorient the innovation in a more positive direction.

Holliday (1992a, 1992b, 1994) analyses a number of cultural issues that tend to emerge in overseas projects involving both expatriate and local personnel:

- intercompetence (Holliday, 1992a) is an intermediary stage of behavioural competence, akin to interlanguage in second language acquisition, seen when individuals are struggling to cope with new or different cultures. Intercompetence is a

two-way phenomenon which occurs commonly when expatriate and local personnel belong to different professional and academic cultures, and in particular where expatriates fail to understand or observe the local cultural protocols

- tissue rejection (Holliday, 1992b) occurs when a curriculum innovation does not become an effective functioning part of the system to which it is implanted and therefore does not survive once project support is taken away. This scenario is particularly likely if there is a conflict between the culture of the classroom and that implicit in the proposed change of behaviour
- informal orders (Holliday, 1992b) are the often opaque unofficial codes of behaviour, strongly influenced by socio-cultural norms, which exist within the host institution and may contribute to both incidences of intercompetence and tissue rejection.

Drawing on Bernstein (1976), Holliday (1994) distinguishes between collection codes and integrationist ones, which he argues represent two prototype academic cultures. The former includes hierarchical structures, didactic pedagogy and strong subject boundaries, the latter less hierarchical organisation, more discovery-oriented pedagogy and 'blurred' subject boundaries. In 3.2.3, I place the Hong Kong context within the collectionist code.

The relevance to TOC implementation of Holliday's work appears to be threefold. Firstly, it indicates the necessity of adapting innovations to the local classroom and societal context, taking into account the culture of the local classroom. Secondly, and more specifically, Holliday (1994) questions the appropriateness of importing communicative approaches to other parts of the world where such approaches may run counter to the prevailing educational norms. There are some grounds for arguing this is

the case with TOC in Hong Kong as discussed in 8.5. Thirdly, the issue of intercompetence reveals the different perceptions of local and expatriate staff, of relevance to TOC which was mainly designed by expatriates but implemented by locals (3.5.3).

2.7.3 Process writing in Hong Kong

The study of process writing is chosen because it is a recent well-documented example of the introduction of an EFL innovation in Hong Kong. The focus of the project was the implementation of process writing by eight secondary school English teachers, studying part-time on an MA TESL course at the institute to which Pennington and Cheung belonged. Process writing was an innovation in the Hong Kong context because it contrasts with one-shot product oriented writing models that are the norm in Hong Kong schools (Cheung, 1996).

As an innovation, process writing shares some common ground with TOC in that one of the aims of TOC was to encourage greater attention to process rather than product (Clark, Scarino & Brownell, 1994). In comparison with the large-scale scope of the TOC innovation, the implementation of process writing in eight schools was small-scale but there are parallels with the current study. Firstly, in terms of sampling (see 4.3.7), both studies involved participants who were largely self-selected, in that they expressed willingness to take part in the respective projects. Secondly, both teacher B in my study (4.3.9) and Pennington and Cheung's teachers were studying at the researchers' host institutions. Thirdly, the two studies involved multiple methods of data collection.

The purpose of Pennington and Cheung's project was to investigate the conditions surrounding the implementation of process writing in Hong Kong secondary schools, to devise an in-service support programme for the innovation and to gain an understanding of how change occurs or is resisted within a specific context. The project involved instruction on the rationale and techniques of process writing followed by a six month initial implementation period during which the teachers received training and support (including assistance with materials) from the project trainer, Cheung, a former secondary school teacher and thus able to empathise with the participants. The teachers then had a one year free implementation period and also produced master's theses on various aspects of process writing. In terms of change models, mutual adaptation (2.4) was evident as the teachers reconciled process writing with their own attitudes and the classroom contextual requirements.

Data collection for the study (Cheung & Pennington, 1994) used multiple methods. Questionnaires were administered both prior to and following implementation. Teacher diaries were written to stimulate participants' reflection on their experiences of implementing process writing. Classroom observations were carried out by Cheung so as to provide feedback to teachers and note the potentials and constraints of the innovation. Transcriptions of the regular monthly project meetings facilitated the sharing of insights into the process of change.

The findings from the project included the following. Firstly, varying degrees of implementation were reported amongst the eight teachers. Unsurprisingly, the factor which impacted most on the degree of implementation appeared to be teachers' initial orientation to the change. In other words, those who were initially most favourably oriented to process writing, implemented it the most faithfully. Whilst those who were initially least positively disposed towards the innovation experienced the most problems in implementation. There is some evidence in chapters 5 and 6 to partially support similar findings with respect to the teachers in the current study. Secondly, pupils seemed to respond well towards the innovation, especially in classes where the teacher was positively disposed towards the innovation and developed a reflective stance towards its implementation. Thirdly, there was evidence that healthy communication channels, (cf. 2.7.1) particularly the supportive role of the project trainer, was an important facilitating factor. This indicates the need for teachers to be supported during the implementation phase of an innovation rather than as tended to be the case with TOC, mainly prior to implementation (see 2.8.4, 8.3.4). Fourthly, there was evidence of teacher attitude change as they experimented with the innovation in their own classrooms. Pennington (1996a) suggests that "teachers change in areas they are already primed to change, and this priming depends on their individual characteristics and prior experiences, which shape their view of the classroom, their students, and themselves as teachers" (p. 340). In contrast, I show in chapter 5 that in the current study there was little evidence of attitude change during the period of research.

Overall, the project revealed some of the developmental processes by which teachers introduce new techniques and adjust them to their own circumstances and needs. From this research, Pennington (1995) suggests a model of three stages in teacher change. Firstly a stage of procedural concerns, when teachers are mainly concerned with materials and techniques, what they are going to do in the classroom. Secondly, as teachers gain skill in managing the materials and techniques, they focus more on interpersonal concerns, for example, pupil reactions and achievements. Thirdly, teachers then move to a deeper level of conceptual reflection, for example, an explanation of individual personal meaning of the innovation and decisions about future applications. These changes are not necessarily linear, as through reflection teachers may move back and forth between different stages. The stages outlined by Pennington above share similarities with the LoU framework discussed in 2.4. I make some observations about the extent of change and development prompted by TOC in 8.3.2.

With respect to the current study, the main relevance of Pennington and Cheung's work is threefold. Firstly, their research indicates that there are individual teachers in Hong Kong willing to carry out process-orientated innovations, akin to TOC. Secondly, their work reaffirms the importance of teacher support during the process of implementation. Thirdly, it provides further evidence for 'stages of development' in teachers' concerns as they carry out an innovation.

To conclude this sub-section, the main issues arising from these three studies of particular relevance to the current study are as follows. Firstly, they illustrate the importance of

classroom observation in innovation research. A particular strength of the current study is that in comparison with the three studies analysed above, classroom observation of the same teachers took place over a longer period of time (see 4.5). Secondly, as with all of the studies it is essential to gauge teacher perceptions of what is going on in their classrooms. As such, interviews can illuminate what teachers experience, their perceptions and the rationale for their actions. Thirdly, all three studies, have shown the complexities of what goes on in the classroom and the potential for mismatch between intentions and realities in curriculum implementation (cf. 3.4.1). Fourthly, there has been some evidence indicating that the classroom is a micro-culture with its own norms and expectations, which are in turn influenced by the values of the wider societal culture.

2.8 Factors affecting implementation

This section reviews a number of factors that affect the implementation or non-implementation of innovations and relates them to TOC. The survey is not exhaustive but purports to analyse the major variables that impinge on the innovation process. The factors examined are practicality, ownership, teacher attitudes, in-service teacher training, resources, communication, teachers' understanding of the innovation and cultural appropriateness. Although the sub-sections are divided for clarity of exposition, it is acknowledged that in many cases the factors interact or overlap. For example, the practicality of an innovation is affected by the amount and quality of resource provision; similarly, teacher attitudes are likely to be affected by the duration and mode of teacher training provision.

2.8.1 Practicality

Doyle & Ponder (1977) indicate that teachers' perceptions of the practicality of an innovation strongly influence their willingness to implement it. They suggest three criteria for deciding whether an innovation will appear to teachers as 'practical':

- *congruence* - between a) the procedures contained in the change proposal and the way the teacher normally conducts classroom activities, b) the setting in which the innovation was developed and that in which it is to be implemented and c) the role demanded of the teacher by the innovation and a teacher's self-image
- *instrumentality* - the change proposal should describe the innovation procedure in terms which depict classroom contingencies
- *cost* - the ratio between the effort required to implement the innovation and the benefit that may be realised.

As implied by the notion of congruence, reforms which require radical changes (cf. 2.3) to teacher behaviour are likely to be labelled as impractical by teachers, irrespective of their objective merits. Also with respect to congruence, White, Martin, Stimson & Hodge (1991) point out that to be practical, an innovation needs to be able to fit into the existing school systems. So, an innovation which places heavy demands on the school in terms of time, personnel and money will be less likely to be adopted than one which is less demanding.

Applying Doyle & Ponder's framework to TOC, with regard to *congruence* there was a sizeable gap between current practices in primary schools (see 3.8) and those recommended in the TOC framework. With regard to the *instrumentality* of the TOC proposals, the concepts and terminology used in the initial explanatory documents were somewhat academic and abstract making them difficult for teachers to grasp (Littlewood,

1993a; Morris *et al.*, 1996). This may reinforce teachers' perceptions of complexity and impracticality, particularly as teachers have limited available time to scrutinise the TOC documentation. Overall, particularly in the early stages of TOC development (3.7), its instrumentality could have been strengthened by less use of abstract terms and more concrete operationalisation of specific classroom procedures for the innovation (Carless 1997a; Littlewood, 1993a).

With respect to *cost*, TOC in common with most innovations, requires additional effort from teachers in terms of, for example, preparation of supplementary materials, design of assessment tasks or familiarisation with new textbooks and different teaching techniques. Cheung, W.W. (1996) posits that TOC teaching puts additional demands on teachers who need to be, "active, creative, flexible, knowledgeable and good at interpersonal skills" (p.41). I discuss the teacher perspectives on practicality in 5.4.5 and some implications in 8.3.3.

2.8.2 Ownership

Ownership is considered to have a strong influence on the likelihood of any innovation establishing itself (Everard & Morris, 1996; Kennedy, 1988; MacDonald, 1991). Ownership is defined as the degree to which an innovation seems to 'belong' to teachers (Kennedy, 1988). The main factors contributing to an initial feeling of ownership are the perceived need for the innovation and the degree to which teachers have had the opportunity to participate in its planning and development. In addition, ownership is often a progressive process which emerges towards the end of a successful change

process, when responsibilities and decision-making have been delegated to schools. As Healey & de Stefano (1997) point out, this form of ownership is engendered through the development of local solutions to implementation issues.

The development of ownership is complicated by the natural tendency in people to resist or even resent ideas which are not their own (MacDonald, *op cit*). This is commonly described as the NIH (not invented here) syndrome (Everard & Morris, *op cit*; Fullan, 1999). This scenario is exacerbated by the fact that teachers are likely to have some feeling of ownership about what is being done in the classroom prior to the introduction of an innovation. Emotional conflicts can arise when teachers are asked to abandon what they have been practising over a long period of time because, as Marris (1993) points out, change can in some senses invalidate prior experiences.

A factor which relates to ownership is the extent to which an educational system is centralised or decentralised, or in other words the extent to which top-down or bottom-up innovations are more common. In a centralised system, (such as Hong Kong) it is relatively difficult for a top-down change to generate ownership amongst teachers, especially in the early implementation stage of an innovation. Furthermore, one of the weaknesses of top-down change is that it tends to view change as an event rather than a process (Hopkins *et al.*, 1994). Such an approach usually fails to engender ownership so that a curriculum may be adopted in name but not actually implemented at the school or classroom level (Waugh & Punch, 1987). In such a case, little or no change occurs, or, in some cases, evidence of change may be demonstrated on isolated occasions, purely for

the benefit of inspectors or visitors (cf. 8.7.2). I demonstrate how and why this tends to occur in Hong Kong's centralised educational system in 3.4.

White (1988) suggests that bottom-up innovations, "which are identified by the users themselves (rather than specified by an outside change agent) will be more effectively and durably installed than those which are imported from outside" (p.133). Stephenson (1994) points out however, that institutional support is still necessary, otherwise, bottom-up curriculum renewal may merely result in a lot of extra work for the teachers. In some contexts, there may also be cultural or historical factors which militate against bottom-up change. Smith (1996) points out that in some cultures, teachers may be wary of implementing change even if they are convinced of its benefits, unless backed by a centralised governmental authority. For TOC in Hong Kong, it seems unlikely that the innovation would have ever got off the ground if a bottom-up approach had been the main strategy, given that teachers lacked the confidence and the professional expertise to initiate change (Morris *et al.*, 1996). The same study also indicated that teachers accepted or approved of a top-down approach and generally did not see it as their role to take part in school decision-making.

The literature indicates that given the limitations of solely centralised or decentralised initiatives, simultaneous top-down and bottom-up strategies are recommended (Fullan, 1999; Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996). Fullan (*op cit*) cites experiences in Chicago (Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow & Easton, 1998) and New York (Elmore & Burney, 1998) where mandates and external accountability measures are successfully married with

bottom-up measures for local capacity development. Similarly, Clark (1988) and Clark *et al.*, (1994) suggest a process whereby administrators or curriculum developers set out guidelines and teachers themselves tailor the guidelines to their own specific teaching context. Fullan (1999) describes this process as inside-out and outside-in, whereby schools simultaneously reach outside for support and receive input from external agencies.

The early implementation of TOC indicated that teachers did not develop feelings of ownership towards TOC (Clark *et al.*, 1999; Morris *et al.*, 1996). Two reasons are indicated. Firstly, in Hong Kong policy-making tends to be highly centralised and there is very limited teacher participation (Hirvela & Law 1991; Morris, 1992, 1995). As such, teacher input to the process of TOC development was relatively minimal, in practice mainly through teacher reference groups and teams working on production of materials under the guidance of ED personnel (Carless, 1997a). Secondly, many teachers and schools did not perceive a need for change. The ensuing lack of commitment to TOC from principals and teachers was evidenced by a ‘wait and see’ stance with very few schools willing to commit themselves at an early stage to the new curriculum (Morris *et al.*, 1996).

2.8.3 Teacher attitudes

Attitudes are defined as “the interplay of feelings, beliefs and thoughts about actions” (Rusch & Perry, 1999, p.291). Teacher attitudes have, unsurprisingly, been found to affect teacher classroom behaviour (Pajares, 1992; Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Wright,

1987). They tend to derive principally from teachers' own experiences as learners, their training, their teaching experience, their interaction with colleagues and the values and norms of the society in which they work. Innovation will invariably involve change in teachers' attitudes and practices (Nicholls, 1983) so teachers' attitudes are clearly an important variable in the change process. If the innovation is incompatible with teachers' existing attitudes, resistance to change is likely to occur (Brown & McIntyre, 1978; Waugh & Punch, 1987; Young & Lee, 1987).

Resistance to change is sometimes perceived negatively but the educational and management literatures reveal that resistance is a natural and healthy reaction to most changes (Maurer, 1996). For example, in 2.7.2, I described how resistance facilitated a successful change in direction for a project. Conflict is inevitable in change so it seems better to face it rather than pretend that it does not exist (Everard & Morris, 1996; Fullan, 1991a; Marris, 1993). Reasons for resistance and strategies for tackling resistance are manifold (see for example, Evans, R. 1996; Harvey 1990; Judson, 1991; Maurer, 1996; Morrison, 1998; Plant, 1987). For my present purposes, resistance is focused on those issues which occur in the literature and also seem applicable to TOC as discussed in 5.4.3, (freely adapted from Fullan 1999; Morrison, 1998). Comments below in parentheses are appended to indicate possible strategies for mitigating resistance. Resistance commonly occurs when there are:

- conflicts between existing values and those of the proposed innovation (can be tackled by mutual adaptation approaches; indications of how new approach builds on previous approaches; acknowledge successes in current approaches)

- emotional anxieties, such as feelings of stress, inadequacy, insecurity, fear, deskilling or loss of self-esteem (can be mitigated by supportive management and colleagues)
- previous discouraging experiences, e.g. a similar innovation has been tried before and rejected (strive for success in innovation; aim to ensure some degree of success with one innovation before implementing another)
- too many simultaneous innovations, increasing workloads excessively (integrate innovations to overcome fragmentation; recognise and reward efforts; encourage teamwork or division of labour).

One way of trying to influence a change in teachers' attitudes is through in-service programmes which aim to bring about a shift in teachers' views of the nature of learning and particularly their own role in that process (Young & Lee, 1987). There is widespread evidence however, that there is little change in teachers' attitudes during short-term (or even longer-term) in-service courses (Brindley & Hood, 1990; Fullan, 1991a). It is now generally accepted that changes in behaviour precede changes in beliefs (Beer, Eisenstadt & Spector, 1990; Brindley & Hood, *op cit*; Fullan, *op cit*). The fact that teachers express positive attitudes towards an innovation is not in itself an indication that they are implementing it in the classroom. The implication for teacher education is that those programmes which encourage experimentation, prior to full implementation, what Rogers (1995) calls trialability (2.6), are more likely to become established. For example, a study of in-service teachers (Carless & Gordon, 1997), revealed that when trying out task-based learning in their schools as part of their course, they experienced fewer problems than they had anticipated beforehand. Classroom evidence and promulgation of

successes in carrying out TOC, especially from early adopters or opinion leaders, would also be a powerful force in creating positive teacher attitudes (Clark *et al.*, 1994).

Positive attitudes may be engendered if teachers can perceive incentives or rewards for implementing the innovation (Doyle & Ponder 1977; Brown, 1980). The rewards may be related to salary, promotion prospects, increased resources or improved working conditions, but as Stern & Keislar (1977) point out, might simply be improved student progress or more stimulating work. Incentives increase the relative advantage of an innovation, so tend to increase the implementation rate (cf. 2.6).

Research into Hong Kong teacher's attitudes (Morris, 1988; Richards, Tung & Ng, 1992; Young & Lee, 1987) and observations of local primary ELT classrooms (e.g. Ng, 1994) indicate that Hong Kong teachers believe their main role is to transmit knowledge and information to students (see also 3.2.3). More learner-centred or discovery-oriented approaches (and TOC falls into that category) are often perceived to be dysfunctional for the examination-oriented approaches prevalent in Hong Kong in that they are perceived as time-consuming and inefficient (Morris, 1988, 1992, 1995). Young & Lee (1987), in their study of a ninety hour in-service course for Hong Kong secondary English teachers noted the difficulty of changing teacher's beliefs away from teacher as transmitter of knowledge towards a more process-oriented, interpretative viewpoint (i.e. one in accordance with TOC principles). Young & Lee (*op cit*) found little discernible change in attitudes and concluded that teachers' beliefs are "a product of values and attitudes

within a particular culture, and thus, of all the factors in curriculum innovation, they are the least susceptible to change” (p.84).

Evidence from unpublished TOC teacher education section surveys indicate that teachers’ initial attitudes towards TOC were somewhat negative based principally on the apparent complexity of the innovation, its perceived lack of practicality and its rushed implementation schedule (see 3.7). The data discussed in Carless (1994) tentatively showed a softening of previous negative feelings towards TOC. In particular, the decision to defer the initial TOC adoption schedule helped to allay some fears of teachers. However, the radical change in attitude and practice required by Hong Kong primary teachers was a major problem facing full implementation of TOC (Clark *et al.*, 1999). With its target-oriented task-based methodology TOC represents a major change to teachers more familiar with a ‘traditional’ classroom (3.2.3).

It seems that TOC teaching requires attitudes not commonly found amongst the Hong Kong primary school teachers involved in its implementation (see also 3.2.3). This study therefore includes gauging the attitudes towards ELT and TOC of a representative sample of primary English teachers. In order to relate attitudes to teaching behaviour, classroom observation is one of the main foci of this study.

2.8.4 In-service teacher education

Given that teachers are the key element in the implementation process (Hargreaves, 1992), teacher education and support is clearly central to the successful implementation

of an innovation. As Stenhouse (1975) wisely observed, there can be no curriculum development without teacher development. In view of the extensive literature on the professional development of teachers (see, for example, Day, 1999), I approach this subsection by outlining how in-service training for TOC was carried out and critique its approach with reference to the relevant literature.

TOC in-service training was initially carried out from September 1992-June 1993 via three day seminars for large numbers of teachers held at a centralised government venue. The reaction to these seminars was mixed with large numbers of teachers feeling the approach was too theoretical and overwhelmed them by transmitting too much information in too short a time (Carless, 1994). As Breen *et al.*, (1989) point out, “The tendency to unidirectionality in training as transmission emphasises the gap between the cocoon of the training workshop and classroom realities rather than reducing that gap” (p. 118). In short, teachers tended to believe that training needed to be less *intensive* but more *extensive* (Carless, 1994; Morris *et al.*, 1996).

The TOC advisory committee (see 3.7.2) noted the inadequate length of time for teacher training courses and highlighted the need for teacher education to be an ongoing process, including in-service support from ED and self-initiated school-based staff development practices in the classroom. The advisory committee recommended four essential features for future teacher education programmes: clear objectives; school-based model with a preliminary phase involving cascading; sufficient and ongoing central support; provision for monitoring and evaluation.

As the first stage in this process, a series of half-day follow-up workshops² (involving small groups of around eight teachers) were carried out in schools on a regional basis in the 1993-1994 school year. Response to the workshops was more favourable than for the mass centralised seminars, perhaps partly because the premature TOC implementation schedule had been withdrawn (see 3.7.1) and there was some opportunity to build on the initial three-day seminars.

From the 1994-5 school year onwards, there was a move toward the school-based modes of teacher education recommended by the advisory committee. A three day TOC school-based preparatory programme was carried out before the school commenced TOC implementation. Subsequently, a two day school-based development programme was carried out to try to build on the early experiences of TOC. The emphasis on school-based training was in accordance with the recent literature (e.g. Darling-Hammond, 1993; Hopkins *et al.*, 1994) but there is evidence (e.g. Clark *et al.*, 1999) to indicate that the content of the school-based modes of teacher education was actually similar to that of the centralised modes with only limited attempts to adapt input to the stage of development of the individual teachers and schools. There were still perceptions that the school-based training was too theoretical and provided general information rather than tailored programmes adapted to school needs (Clark *et al.*, *ibid*).

One-shot short term training, as initially practised for TOC, is insufficient for ongoing developmental purposes (Fullan, 1991a). As Brindley & Hood (1990) observe, “if

teachers are being asked to change some aspect of their classroom behaviour, they need professional development activities which enable them at the same time to use an innovation and to work through the implications of change with colleagues” (p.244). Ongoing programmes of support and supervision are thus required in the post-implementation phase Verspoor (1989). Without sufficient retraining and support, even teachers initially enthusiastic to the innovation can become frustrated by problems in implementation and eventually turn against the project (Gross, Giacquinta & Bernstein, 1971). This is particularly relevant in the Hong Kong context, where the primary English teaching force has not yet reached advanced stages of professionalism (Lee, I. 1996; 3.3.2).

Similarly, Joyce & Showers (1980, 1982, 1988) argue convincingly that effective forms of in-service training include theory or principles, demonstration or modelling, practice, feedback and coaching. This enables teachers to see the innovation being simulated or modelled during training, the opportunity to try it and receive feedback within a controlled supportive setting. Coaching in the workplace following initial training provides support during implementation, collegiality and companionship (Joyce & Showers, 1988).

TOC teacher education, however, seems to have involved mainly the transmission of information and description of principles without providing classroom support for the implementation stage. In addition, teacher respondents in the Clark *et al.*, (1999) survey also expressed doubts about whether TOC teacher educators, who often lacked recent

primary experience, were capable themselves of actually carrying out TOC. Pennington & Cheung (1995) point out that trainers need to be able to empathise with implementing teachers (cf. the role of Cheung as project trainer in 2.7.3) and so gain from sharing characteristics similar to those of the adopters. Supportive and sensitive communication is desirable in that proposals for a new approach tend to contain an implicit criticism of previous practice (Hyde, 1996). In other words, there are emotional factors impacting on the change process (Hargreaves, 1998).

In summary, the challenge of providing TOC-related in-service training to the entire workforce of teachers of English, Mathematics and Chinese was not dealt with entirely successfully. It seems that most needed was additional post-implementation support for teachers carrying out TOC (see also 8.3.4).

2.8.5 Resources

The resourcing of an innovation is generally accepted to be an important factor in its prospects for successful implementation. Everard & Morris (1996) point out that the capacity for curriculum improvement tends to be dependent on the availability of sufficient resources in terms of three classifications, human, material and financial. Similarly, Fullan & Miles (1992) observe, “Change demands additional resources for training, for substitutes, for new materials, for new space, and, above all, for time. Change is ‘resource-hungry’ because of what it represents - developing solutions to complex problems, learning new skills, arriving at new insights, all carried out in a social

setting already overloaded with demands. Such serious personal and collective development necessarily demands resources” (p.750).

Teaching materials are a crucial resource in the promotion of an innovation. As Kouraogo (1987) states, teachers facing the implementation of a new curriculum seek ‘ready-made materials’ that can be used without adaptation in their own classrooms. Published materials increase the practicality of an innovation (cf. 2.8.1) because they operationalise the principles of the change. This is particularly helpful in a case, such as TOC, when the teachers perceive the reform to be complex and abstract (Morris *et al.*, 1996).

Teaching materials in the form of TOC textbooks were prepared by commercial publishers in time for the first main phase of TOC implementation in September 1995. In contrast to the pilot scheme (see 3.7.1), teachers now had some TOC-like materials ready-made for use in the classroom. Teacher and teacher educator respondents to the Clark *et al.*, (1999) study did however express a number of reservations about TOC textbooks, particularly in view of their conservative nature representing a weak form of TOC, moving only part way towards TOC principles. White (1992) indicates that this is a common phenomenon in that publishers often enact a conservative role as they tend “to play safe, avoiding radically different methods which cannot be easily packaged and sold” (p.245). I believe the TOC textbooks seem to indicate a ‘mutual adaptation’ perspective in that the materials contain some traditional and some TOC features.

From 1994 onwards a wide range of resources was developed by ED, programmes of study, exemplar tasks, assessment guidelines, copymaster worksheets and explanatory videos including extracts from TOC-style lessons, demonstrating the new curriculum in action. Three TOC resource centres scattered geographically across Hong Kong were opened, where teachers could access resources. Overall whilst in the pilot stage the reform was underresourced, by the 1996-7 TOC was well-resourced. Lo (1998) describes this degree of resources support as “unprecedented” in comparison with previous innovations in Hong Kong, which were usually underresourced (Morris, 1995). Respondents in the Clark *et al.*, (1999) study indicated however, some problems in the use of resources, including lack of time to digest information or materials and the difficulty of selecting, adapting and integrating resources in a school culture where the textbook has been dominant and the lack of preparation time due to heavy workloads (3.3.2).

Fullan (1993) points out that what is crucial in resource-management is not just the amount of resources (because resource-rich innovations have also failed) but how the selective use of these resources is linked to key tenets in the management of change, such as vision-building, mastery and collective effort.

2.8.6 Communication

The way in which ideas are communicated is central to the process of innovation for as Markee (1997) points out, “Good communication among project participants is a key to successful curricular innovation” (p.174). I have already pointed out in 2.7.1, how

inadequate channels of communication impeded the implementation of a Greek innovation. Communication is important at a number of levels, for example, from central governmental agencies to schools, from school management to teachers, from teachers to other colleagues, from schools to parents and pupils. Fullan (1991a) warns us of a cardinal fact of social change that, “people will always misinterpret and misunderstand some aspect of the purpose or practice of something that is new to them” (p.199). Communication therefore needs to be two-way, involving feedback, negotiation of meaning, modification of plans and pragmatism, in other words a mutual adaptation perspective (cf. 2.4.2).

In the business domain, Kotter (1995) identifies inadequate communication as a major barrier to change. He points out how successful change leaders, incorporate messages about change on a continual basis in their daily activities, they ‘walk the talk’ by showing through their own personal example how they are involving themselves in the specific change. Kotter (*ibid*) states, “Communication comes in both words and deeds, and the latter are often the most powerful form. Nothing undermines change more than behaviour by important individuals that is inconsistent with their words” (p.13).

School principals obviously play an important part in how intra-school communication is effected and the principal’s role as a crucial factor in the management of school change has been well-documented (Conley, 1997; Smith & Piele, 1997). Indeed as Everard & Morris (1996) point out, the head of any organisation plays a disproportionate role in determining the degree of success of a change. If a principal actively encourages and

supports teachers in the implementation of innovation, rather than merely paying lip-service to the intentions of reform, then substantial change is more likely to take place. In the Hong Kong primary school context, it is common for teachers to look for guidance and leadership to more senior teachers and principals given the hierarchical nature of ranks and roles in the staff structure, (Morris *et al.*, 1996). Given the innovation overload in Hong Kong schools, the short shelf-life of innovations and the perception that TOC might not survive the 1997 handover (Morris *et al.*, 1996), it was common for many principals to adopt a 'wait and see' attitude (Clark *et al.*, 1999). In schools where these kind of attitudes were common, commitment to TOC was variable and could depend on the personal initiatives of individual teachers. In schools, where a more genuine commitment to TOC was evident from principals, the extent of TOC implementation was greater and in some cases, the TOC reform provided principals or individual teachers with a way of legitimising attempts to improve the school (see also 5.4.4, 8.3.1). The perspectives of the principals in the three case study schools are briefly reported in 6.2.

Initial communication of an innovation is particularly important because as Doyle & Ponder (1977) point out, teachers tend to make judgements rapidly, so they are liable to decide on the practicability and desirability of an innovation soon after their first exposure to it. In the case of TOC, these initial reactions seemed to be somewhat negative (3.7.1). This puts a particular pressure on change agents to formulate initial communications carefully and persuasively in a non-threatening manner, for as discussed in 2.8.3, resistance to change is a natural phenomenon. Building bridges between previous practices and the proposed innovation and indicating how the new practice

further develops existing good practices (see 8.3.1) are constructive means of communication.

Communication was somewhat problematic during the process of adoption and implementation of TOC. There are several factors contributing to this situation. Firstly, previous unsuccessful innovation experiences in Hong Kong (Morris, 1995; 3.4.3) have contributed to a lack of mutual trust between ED and teachers (Hirvela & Law, 1991). This tends to make teachers sceptical about communications emanating from the ED and makes them wary of faddism whereby teachers believe that the preferred strategy is to make the minimum of adjustments in the expectation that a reform will be short-lived (Morris, 1995). Secondly, within a top-down centralised system, communication has tended to be one-way, with little opportunity for the teaching profession to voice concerns in a meaningful and constructive dialogue. As indicated in 2.8.2, the way TOC was communicated to teachers did not enable them to develop a feeling of ownership towards the innovation. Thirdly, the communication of TOC was hindered by political infighting and 'turf wars' between different sections of the government (Morris, 1995). Frequent personnel changes tended to prompt inconsistent messages across departments and over time. In the case of TOC teacher education, this reduced the credibility of teacher educators (Clark *et al.*, 1999). Fourthly, initial dissemination of the curriculum (3.5) tended to be abstract, inexplicit and outline unrealistic implementation schedules. This contributed to the perception that TOC was an unworkable innovation.

2.8.7 Teachers' understanding of an innovation

If teachers are to implement an innovation faithfully, it is essential that they have a thorough understanding of the principles and practice of the proposed change (Brown & McIntyre, 1978). For the purpose of this study, understanding is defined as i) the ability to articulate the principles of TOC in a way that shows both knowledge of TOC 'theory' and some personal interpretation of the meaning of the innovation and ii) an awareness of the classroom implications of these principles. Fullan (1991a) points out, however, that it is common for the intentions of curriculum developers to be misunderstood by teachers. Brown & McIntyre (*op cit*), for example, found that teachers' misconceptions of four Scottish innovations were, to a large extent, responsible for negative feelings towards them. As noted in 2.7.1, Karavas-Doukas (1995) found that the Greek teachers exhibited partial but incomplete understanding of the communicative innovation they were supposed to be implementing. Likewise, Gross *et al.*, (1971) found that the majority of teachers in an innovative school were unable to identify the main principles of multiple innovations which they were struggling to implement. As indicated in 2.8.6 open dialogue between teachers and curriculum developers may enable practitioners to clarify their own understandings and relate them to their own school context.

Findings from Clark *et al.*, (1999) and Morris *et al.*, (1996) showed that many teachers did not have a good understanding of TOC. Morris *et al.*, (1996) concluded that "whilst many teachers had begun to use some of the vocabulary associated with TOC, their understanding of many of its key elements was limited, so that they had significant difficulties in operationalising the key concepts in the classroom" (p.243). I suggest the

following reasons contribute to teachers not having a strong theoretical or practical understanding of TOC. Firstly, in the Hong Kong context many teachers are untrained, or not subject trained (3.3.2); this means that they are unlikely to possess the foundation in teaching methodology which could provide a springboard for curriculum development. Secondly, as discussed in 2.8.4, initial TOC training tended to be insufficiently detailed and extensive to give teachers more than a general orientation to the principles of the innovation. Thirdly, as Morris *et al.*, (1996) point out TOC is both a multi-faceted and a complex innovation (3.8) which has been interpreted in a variety of ways and fundamental misunderstandings have arisen. Fourthly, teacher understanding is complicated by the fact that TOC represents a different teaching method to previous or existing methods, although there are similarities in terms of AA (3.4.3). This may make it more difficult for teachers to relate TOC to what they are currently doing in the classroom.

Given that TOC shares similar characteristics with communicative approaches (see 3.8) those teachers, such as teachers A and C in this study, who were trained in the communicative approach after the adoption of a communicative syllabus in 1983 (3.3.3), are likely to have a greater familiarity with these principles than untrained teachers or those trained in an audio-lingual approach during the late 1970s. English teachers who have followed pre-service or in-service courses since that time would be expected to have an understanding of the communicative principles which underpin TOC.

2.8.8 Cultural appropriateness

Education systems do not take place in a vacuum but are products of the society and culture in which they belong. By culture, I mean “widely shared ideals, values, formation and uses of categories, assumptions about life, and goal-directed activities that become unconsciously or subconsciously accepted as ‘right’ and ‘correct’ by people who identify themselves as members of a society” (Brislin, 1990, p.11). Transporting educational ideas from one culture to another is a common trend but one which can have negative implications if minimal attention is paid to the receptivity of the host context to the imported policy (Dimmock, 1998). As Kennedy & Kennedy (1996) point out, “Change agents should be prepared to move at the pace set by the society they are working in rather than setting their own” (p.360). The failure to import curricula successfully has been common within the Hong Kong context, where policy-makers have often looked to Anglo-American countries as a source for educational ideas but frequently innovations have failed to take root in the Hong Kong classroom (Morris, 1995; 3.4.2).

As noted in 2.7.2, if innovations are not to suffer ‘tissue rejection’, they need to be culturally appropriate for the user-system in which they are being introduced (Holliday, 1994). This would include both the macro or societal culture and the micro or school organisational culture. Macro level analyses of cross-cultural business practices have been undertaken in the seminal work of Hofstede (1980, 1990, 1991) and more recent work by Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars (1997). Walker & Dimmock, (1999) and Dimmock (2000) develop these ideas further and apply them to education. At the macro level, two dimensions of these cross-cultural analyses seem particularly relevant to TOC

in Hong Kong. Firstly, the distinction between individualism versus collectivism, in other words the extent to which loose links between individuals or tightly-linked cohesive groups are valued more highly. According to Hofstede's research (1990), Hong Kong can be characterised as collectivist, where individuals prioritise group goals above personal goals. South East Asian societies generally show evidence of collectivist tendencies in educational practices, such rituals as responding together in the Vietnamese classroom (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996) or the prevalence of choral repetition in the Hong Kong classroom (Ng, 1994). As Cheng (1997) points out, the concern for individual needs and diverse goals appeals only to a small minority and "The notions of individual-based and student-centred teaching have been slow to take root in Hong Kong schools. Traditional Chinese classrooms rely heavily on the organisation of the class and the social relations among students" (p.39). Put more strongly, Cheng & Wong (1996) state, "Individualised teaching, where teachers work towards diverse targets at different paces, is almost inconceivable in East Asian societies" (p.44). I discuss the notion of the cultural appropriacy of individualised learning as recommended by TOC in 8.5.2.

Secondly, cross-cultural analyses distinguish between large or small power distance cultures, in other words the existing degree of hierarchically organised inequality in terms of power. In Hofstede's (1991) terms, Hong Kong is a high power-distance culture, whereby the less powerful members of organisations expect and accept that power should be organised unequally along hierarchical lines. Hofstede equates schooling in high power-distance cultures with the teacher as 'guru', strict order in the classroom, pupils only speaking when invited, and deference towards teachers inside and outside of school.

This may conflict to some extent with the TOC notion of teacher as facilitator of task-based learning. I discuss these aspects further in 8.5.1.

At the micro level, particular attention has focused on the cultural appropriacy of communicative or process-oriented approaches in non-western cultures (Ellis, 1996; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; Holliday, 1994). This is particularly relevant to the current study because the task-based nature of TOC (English) builds on communicative approaches. Aspects of communicative methodologies may conflict with Asian values and expectations of the roles of teachers and learners. As Ellis (1996) points out, for example, the Western notion of teacher as facilitator tends to conflict with Asian views of the teacher as model. Similarly, Ho & Crookall (1995) indicate the culturally constructed nature of the classroom setting, the importance of social relations and hierarchy in the classroom and the teacher role within that setting. As Cortazzi (1990) points out learners have expectations which are derived mainly from their cultural background and/or their previous learning experiences. In a Chinese context, although Cortazzi is referring mainly to the PRC it seems that there are also implications for Hong Kong, the reading and writing of the mother-tongue involves much tracing, copying and memorisation of ideographical characters. Given this experience in learning the mother tongue, Chinese learners can expect to put great emphasis on memory, hard-work and rote-learning within a controlled and structured learning approach (3.2.3).

These societal expectations about the nature of teaching and learning contribute to the difficulties of implementing communicative approaches in other Asian contexts, for

example, Hui (1997) with reference to China, Li (1998) with respect to South Korea and Tomlinson (1990) applied to the Indonesian context; similarly Cheah (1998) discusses the challenges of implementing a process-writing innovation in Singapore.

Applying these lines of argument to TOC in 8.5, I analyse the cultural appropriacy for the Hong Kong context of four dimensions of the innovation, the roles of teachers and learners, task-based learning as defined by TOC, catering for individual learner differences and TOC assessment.

2.9 Summary of chapter

This chapter has explored the nature of innovation and has identified TOC as being a fundamental change to current practices (see also 3.8). If TOC is implemented according to a fidelity perspective, it would represent a radical change from previous practices. The chapter has however, also emphasised the complexity of the process of change. It has delineated a number of factors which affect the implementation of innovations. What has emerged most strongly from this chapter is that teachers are the fundamental base upon which a curriculum innovation will thrive or founder. Their attitudes, their prior experiences, their pre-service and in-service training, their emergent understandings shape their response to an innovation and the extent to which mutual adaptation will take place. The review of relevant literature also reveals that there is still a need to find out much more about what goes on in classrooms during the implementation of a curriculum innovation. Only by sustained observation of teachers and pupils preferably

longitudinally, and through focused discussion of issues emerging from these observations can we understand the crucial teacher perspective on change.

Specific issues which are addressed in this study and which have been foregrounded in this chapter include the following:

1. The extent to which the teachers are adopting (and perceive they are adopting) a fidelity perspective towards TOC implementation?
2. How and why they are adapting TOC?
3. The extent to which for them as individuals TOC represents a large or small-scale change?
4. What stages of development they have reached in their response to the innovation?
5. From the teachers' perspective, what factors impact most strongly on their implementation of TOC?
6. What are the teachers' attitudes towards teaching and learning, towards ELT and TOC and how do these attitudes impact on their implementation of TOC?
7. To what extent did the teachers' change in attitudes and approaches during the implementation of TOC?
8. How did the teachers approach the implementation of TOC in their classrooms and what was their rationale for their individual approaches?
9. What was the impact of the school culture and the wider societal culture on the implementation of TOC?

Given the importance of the contextual and socio-cultural factors in the implementation of innovation, the following chapter outlines some of the main relevant characteristics of

the Hong Kong primary school context and provides additional background information on the development, principles and early implementation of TOC.

CHAPTER 3. THE CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND FOR TOC

3.1 Scope of chapter

This chapter analyses selected aspects of the Hong Kong context with specific reference to the TOC educational reform. As suggested in chapter 2, the social, cultural and educational context plays an important role in the implementation of innovation. Innovations are shaped by social and cultural forces which affect the extent to which they will be accepted, modified (mutual adaptation), implemented faithfully or institutionalised. Failure to take into account the socio-cultural context adequately would obviously inhibit the implementation of an innovation. The chapter places TOC within the wider Hong Kong educational system by discussing a number of salient features. I discuss the most relevant aspects of the Hong Kong learning culture and the primary school context, with specific reference to ELT. I critique curriculum development and implementation in Hong Kong so as to demonstrate how previous experiences in educational reform impacted on TOC. I summarise the principles of TOC and discuss how the career of the innovation unfolded.

3.2 Salient features of the Hong Kong education system

Here I restrict the discussion to those issues which impact most directly on the implementation of the TOC initiative and/or the discussion in chapters 5-8. I make some observations about ED, language in education and the general learning context.

3.2.1 *ED and reform*

ED is similar to what in other countries might be a Ministry of Education or Department of Education. The system is highly centralised (Morris, 1995) so ED plays a major role in the planning, adoption, dissemination and implementation of innovations which are handed down to schools. Within ED, the Curriculum Development Institute (CDI) most directly impacted on the development of TOC. CDI sub-sections relevant to TOC include a development section, an assessment section and a teacher education section. Other ED sub-sections focused on reforms which might have been perceived as complementary but in actual fact were generally regarded as competitors for attention and resources (Morris *et al.*, 1996, see also 3.4.3). As Morris (1995) observes, the proliferation of divisions, sections and sub-sections tends to result in fragmentation, political infighting and rivalries within ED. This had a negative impact on TOC implementation in that different messages emanated from different sectors of government (Clark *et al.*, 1999) or as Morris (1995) observes there was more conflict between various sections within the government than there was between the government and the schools.

Education policy, or for the purposes of this thesis the formal development of TOC as a policy initiative, derives not directly from ED, but from the Education Commission (EC) which mainly comprises governmental and educational sector representatives. Education Commission Reports (ECRs) have served to set the agenda for educational developments in Hong Kong, and what became TOC was outlined in EC (1990), see 3.5.2.

3.2.2 *Language in education in Hong Kong*

The role of language in education is a major influence on the Hong Kong educational system and a significant catalyst for the development of TOC in that declining language standards (English and written Chinese) were one of the problems which TOC was designed to address. The avowed aim of education in Hong Kong (Chief Executive's Policy Address, 1997) is to produce students who are trilingual (i.e. able to speak Cantonese, English and Putonghua) and biliterate (i.e. able to master written Chinese and written English).

Motivation to learn English is mainly driven by instrumental forces, English is perceived as a key to education, career and better job prospects (Fu, 1987). Attitude surveys have consistently reported positive orientations amongst students to the learning of English (Axler, Yang & Stevens, 1998; Pennington & Yue, 1994). Bickley (1990) suggests that the desire to acquire English language skills as a means to material benefits is a long-term and stable characteristic of the Hong Kong population.

Because of these perceptions of the instrumental value of English, parents have tended to prefer English medium secondary education for their pupils (Chan, Hoare & Johnson, 1997). Given the demands of English medium education in a context where English seems now to have more characteristics of a foreign rather than a second language (Evans, S. 1996), there has been a gulf between policy and practice in the English-medium schools (Johnson, 1991). During the 1990s, a vast majority of secondary schools have claimed to be English-medium although, in practice, this has often meant mixed code i.e.

the use of English textbooks being explicated mainly through Cantonese (Boyle, 1997; Johnson, 1991). Mixed code is a compromise between English-medium instruction, which the majority of students cannot cope with, and Chinese-medium instruction which parents do not favour (Evans, S., *op cit*), i.e. mixed code is “a valid survival strategy in a difficult situation” (EC, 1994 p.23). In 5.3.3 and 6.2.3, I identify the use of mixed-code in teacher B’s lessons as a prevalent feature of her teaching approach.

3.2.3. *The learning context*

In 2.8.8, I highlighted the importance of both macro or societal factors and micro or school cultures in the acceptance of innovations. This sub-section makes some general observations about the culture of the teaching and learning in Hong Kong; some more specific comments on primary schooling follow in 3.3.

Cheng K.M. (1997) outlines some of the main characteristics of the Hong Kong teaching and learning context. Firstly, parents regard education as the main route for upward social mobility. An aspiration for education becomes internalised in the minds of both parents and students. Secondly, Hong Kong is characterised as a collective society where concern for individual needs and diverse goals appeal only to a minority (see also 2.8.8). Thirdly, there is a general emphasis on effort and diligence rather than ability. Failure in student achievement is usually put down to ‘laziness’ rather than a lack of ability. Fourthly, discipline is an important aspect of school life as a part of training for life, and Hong Kong classes are generally better behaved and more attentive than those in the West (Cheng, *ibid*).

Biggs (1996a) uses the term Confucian heritage cultures (CHCs), to refer to the countries or educational systems of China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong which have been influenced by the tenets of Confucianism. Biggs (*ibid*) also explores the paradox of high levels of learning amongst students from these countries (as measured in international surveys), when the antecedent conditions for learning seem unfavourable (large classes, apparently authoritarian teaching styles, examination-oriented). For example, Biggs demonstrates how repetitive learning can act as the first stage towards deeper understanding, and that rote learning should not necessarily be equated with surface learning.

In CHCs the teacher is a figure of respect as a source of authority and wisdom (Biggs, *ibid*). Within this tradition, teachers in Hong Kong have tended to see their main role as to impart knowledge to pupils, who are generally expected to sit quietly and absorb information. Similarly, Pennington & Cheung (1995) identify an expectation of tight control by the teacher over class activities and students' behaviour.

Another factor affecting what goes on in the classroom is that teachers in Hong Kong put particular emphasis on completing the textbook (EC, 1994). Ng (1994) observes that "many teachers, perhaps as a result of perceived or actual pressure from the school or from parents, try to 'finish the textbook' with little regard to the ability of the students" (p.82). Tong (1996) posits that adherence to the textbook is reinforced by the importance of texts in Chinese culture. Similarly Cortazzi (1998) suggests that there are cultural

factors which encourage deference to textbooks, observing that in Chinese cultures “the teacher and the textbook become invested with moral authority” (p.44).

Schooling in Hong Kong is acknowledged to be highly examination-oriented (Cheng, L.Y., 1997; Fullilove, 1992). From kindergarten onwards there is considerable competition through tests and examinations. The examination culture puts pressure on students and for those less successful it seems that demotivation is common (Walker, 1997). Cheng & Wong (1996) view competition as the essence of schooling in Hong Kong and indicate that competition is a means of socialisation so as to prepare the young for tougher future societal competition. The fact that TOC is being introduced into a competitive and highly examination-oriented system plays an inhibiting role in its implementation (see also 3.4.1). Adamson & Morris (1998) conclude that whilst there are examples of innovative practices in some schools, the importance attached to testing and selection has generally contributed to resistance to attempts at curriculum reform.

In summary, the traditional Hong Kong classroom can be categorised as predominantly teacher-centred, textbook-dominated and examination-oriented. In Bernstein’s (1971) terms, this seems to equate to a collectionist code (see 2.7.2). These antecedent conditions would tend to be unfavourable for the introduction of a process-oriented innovation such as TOC.

3.3 Primary schooling in Hong Kong

Here I examine aspects of the primary school system, the primary teaching force and the primary English curriculum which provide contextual background to the implementation of TOC.

3.3.1 Primary school system

Hong Kong has 900 primary schools, with a student intake of 467,000 and a teaching force of 18,000 (Adamson & Morris, 1998). Most primary schools are operated by non-profit-making voluntary organisations, which receive funding from the government. These schools are known as aided schools and represent around 90% of schools. The government itself directly manages only a small number of primary schools (Hong Kong Government, 1997). The three schools involved in the current study are all aided schools and a description of their main characteristics follows in 6.2.

Even before the age of six, most children in Hong Kong have already had two or three years of education at kindergarten level. Although attendance at kindergarten is voluntary, 85% of the relevant age group are enrolled (Education & Manpower Branch, 1994). In kindergarten, most children have already had the chance to learn the English alphabet and some simple vocabulary, so when they progress to primary schools at the age of six, they already possess some grounding in English language.

Given the limited availability of land in Hong Kong, the majority of primary schools operate bi-sessionally, with two separate schools coexisting in the same premises. Pupils

are either enrolled for the morning session from about 8.00-12.45 or the afternoon session from about 1.00-5.45. Afternoon sections of schools are usually less well-regarded than morning schools because most parents would prefer their children to attend school in the morning when they are fresher and probably more receptive to learning. Whole-day schooling for all primary students is regarded as a long-term governmental goal (Board of Education, 1997; Hong Kong Government, 1997).

In terms of curriculum content, four main academic subjects represent the core of the curriculum and are taught for approximately three to four hours per week. These core subjects are Chinese, English, Mathematics and General Studies, the latter being made up of science, social studies and health education. Chinese is the normal medium of instruction and English is the only other language commonly taught as a timetabled subject, although Putonghua (Mandarin Chinese) is becomingly increasingly common as an extra-curriculum subject (Adamson & Au-Yeung Lai, 1997). Each subject has a panel chair, who co-ordinates and organises the work of the panel of teachers. In the past this position tended to rotate in order to share workload but in recent years has tended to become a more long-term post on the basis of qualifications, seniority and ability (Carless & Wong, 2000). Both teachers A and C in the current study hold responsibilities as panel chairs (5.2).

Class sizes in primary schools are usually around thirty-five to forty and classrooms are cramped with little storage space. This difficulty is exacerbated by noise pollution from traffic, nearby construction work and adjacent classrooms. Teachers often use

microphones to enable themselves to be clearly audible (Carless, 1997a). The use of microphones and the background noise referred to above seems to be an obstacle to the kind of pupil participation envisaged by TOC.

A large amount of homework is set and primary students may face two or three hours of homework every day in addition to regular classroom tests and examinations (Carless & Wong, 2000). In the last two years of primary schooling, students undergo the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) system. This selective system exerts a strong influence on the primary school curriculum (Biggs, 1996b) into which TOC was introduced and its impact was occasionally referred to by the informants for this thesis. As part of the SSPA process, learners have to sit for an academic aptitude test (AAT) which consists of two papers, verbal reasoning and numerical reasoning. Both papers are in Chinese; English is not tested as part of the AAT. The test results are used for scaling learners' performance in their internal school assessments. Based on the results, students are promoted to five bands of secondary schools, ranging from band 1 (the highest standard) to band 5 (the lowest standard). Competition to be admitted to high band schools is intense.

3.3.2 The Primary English Teacher

As indicated in 1.2 and 2.9, the role of the teacher is central to the management of curriculum innovation. In the primary sector, the majority of teachers qualify via two-year or three-year Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) teaching certificate courses, conducted through the medium of Chinese, (except for the subject of English). Primary student teachers are trained to teach the core subjects of Chinese, Mathematics

and General Studies, and are also required to opt for a 'fourth elective', such as English, Music, Physical Education or Art. In other words, English is not afforded a high status in such programmes.

The Hong Kong primary teaching workforce is mainly made up of dedicated and hard-working teachers, faced by difficult teaching conditions and heavy workloads (Carless & Wong, 2000). However, concerns about the quality of the teaching profession have been voiced frequently in Hong Kong, particularly during the last two decades (e.g. Education Commission, 1990, 1992; Llewellyn *et al.*, 1982; Tsui, 1993). Amidst widespread societal perceptions that English language standards are falling (Lee, Kennedy & Fullilove, 1998) the proficiency and competency of language teachers has been questioned (Falvey & Coniam, 1997).

A recent survey of the attitudes and opinions of Hong Kong primary teachers by Lee, I. (1996) revealed that they lacked confidence in their English language proficiency, were slightly more confident about their classroom teaching skills, and had low self-esteem as professionals. Their lack of confidence may derive in part from the shortage of trained English teachers, which necessitates many non-subject trained teachers being asked to teach English. The teacher survey for the period contemporaneous with this study revealed that 55% of primary English teachers were not subject-trained (ED, 1997). The same survey indicated that only 3% of primary English teachers were graduates, and it is government policy that more graduate positions be created with a long-term aim of an all graduate teaching profession. EC (1994) points out that untrained language teachers (and

even some of the trained ones) tend to lack both the awareness of trends in teaching methodology and proficiency in using English. As a result, they are often unable to provide a good model of language use or to teach consistently through the target language (see the discussion of mixed code in 3.3.2).

3.3.3 *The Primary English Curriculum*

Prior to the introduction of TOC, the primary English syllabus dated from 1981 (Curriculum Development Committee, 1981) and proposed a communicative approach to the teaching of English. The stated aim of the 1981 syllabus was to provide learners with opportunities for “using what they have learnt in a wide variety of communicative activities”, (Curriculum Development Committee, *ibid*, p.5). This syllabus was officially introduced but not actually implemented in the classroom to a wide extent (EC, 1994; Evans, S. 1996). EC (*op cit*) noted that the Hong Kong primary ESL classroom tends to concentrate on the formal grammatical features of the language, at the expense of encouraging pupils to use the language. It also identified other reasons for the failed implementation of communicative approaches including: teachers’ lack of confidence in using English; the preference of many schools for traditional approaches to teaching; large class sizes which inhibited communicative practice of language items; uninspiring textbooks; inadequate facilities for listening to high-quality models of English; the lack of an assessment framework to reflect the goals of the syllabus; and the failure of the wider environment to support the use of English outside class.

Most classes are taught using predominantly traditional teacher-centred, whole-class methods (Morris, 1995). Ng (1994), in a series of classroom observations at the primary level, identified the following features: oral language taught using drills following a strict audiolingual approach; too much stress on choral chanting of target forms and yes/no answers; a preponderance of isolated grammar exercises; and children who were passive with little opportunity for personal initiative. Ng (*ibid*) also noted that English language periods were often compartmentalised into periods of English grammatical usage, composition, reading, dictation, listening and speaking. Teachers were encouraged to use the target language as much as possible but in practice, mixed code (see also 3.3.2) was common.

Evans, S. (1996) argues that communicative approaches did not take root because of the failure of policy-makers to take into account the unique features of the Hong Kong context which would clearly militate against the implementation of a learner-centred, process-oriented teaching approach. For example, given the high correlation between proficiency in English and socio-economic status (see 3.3), it is not surprising that both students and teachers tend to see the main goal of English teaching as to prepare students for the competitive public examinations (see also 3.2.3). Product-oriented approaches are generally perceived to be more effective methods of examination preparation than more process-oriented approaches (Cheung, W.W. 1996). As TOC is based on communicative and process-oriented approaches, these points are factors which may inhibit the implementation of TOC.

Overall, despite the strong societal motivation for the learning of English, as discussed in 3.3.2, pupil achievements in English language have not reached the levels demanded by society. EC (1994) identifies a ‘poor outcome’ of six years of primary English noting that many pupils seem to become demotivated due to uninteresting textbook-based teaching methods, a focus on testing rather than teaching, a perceived or actual lack of success, and unsatisfactory models of English from teachers.

3.4 Curriculum innovation in Hong Kong

3.4.1 Modes of curriculum development

How curriculum development is tackled is likely to have an impact on teacher response to an innovation. The approach to curriculum development in Hong Kong is typically an R, D and D one, whereby a syllabus is developed by external experts and disseminated via ED to the schools. Morris (1995) characterises the Hong Kong practice of this mode of curriculum development as centralised and bureaucratic. Morris (1992, 1995) points out that a major problem with this method of *curriculum development is that teachers at the front-line* have little input on the content and methods recommended by the syllabuses. A repercussion is that there is frequently a mismatch between curriculum *intentions*, what the syllabus suggests should take place in the classroom and curriculum *realities*, what actually occurs in the classroom (Morris, 1992, 1995). This echoes one of Fullan’s (1993) lessons (see 2.5) that mandates do not lead to change.

In addition, to the negative impact on reform of centralisation as described above, there are a number of additional factors inhibiting such intended curricula from being

implemented and five such factors are discussed below. Firstly, a number of curriculum innovations adopted in Hong Kong have been imported from the West (cf. 2.8.8), especially the UK (Morris, 1995; Dimmock & Walker, 1998). Dimmock (1998) uses the term “policy cloning” to refer to the transportation of an educational innovation from one context to another. Policy cloning enables the planning of reform to be completed speedily and with limited resources but has a serious negative consequence in that “minimal attention is paid to the receptivity of the host culture to the imported policy” (Dimmock, 1998, p.375). Many cloned innovations have failed to take root in the local classroom because they contain features which render them incongruent with local socio-cultural norms. Dimmock & Walker (*op cit*) point out, “the introduction of school reforms which directly challenge long established and deeply ingrained cultural norms raise serious doubts about the feasibility of their successful implementation” (p. 489).

Secondly, the competitiveness amongst schools creates pressure for teaching towards public examinations and for the maximisation of pass rates to be a major criterion of teacher effectiveness (Morris 1992, 1995). The kind of teaching styles adopted will often be those that teachers and students perceive as most effective in attaining this goal. In practice, this tends to be a transmissive, exam-oriented teaching style with frequent completion of past papers and examination practice exercises. More child-centred or discovery approaches, recommended by curriculum specialists, are generally considered by teachers as time-consuming and inefficient for these exam-oriented purposes (Morris, 1992). As Wong (1996) points out, “it is a tradition of the education system in Hong Kong that didactic teaching is a superior mode because of constraints of public

examination and unwillingness of teachers to change” (p. 92).

Thirdly, teacher training for the adoption of innovations has mainly concentrated on introducing the principles of the approach (Morris, 1995). The misguided assumption has been that once teachers have understood the principles of an approach, they can return to their schools and implement it. Support during implementation as opposed to prior to it, has been conspicuous by its absence (Morris, 1995).

Fourthly, many innovations in Hong Kong during the 1980s and early 1990s were inadequately resourced (Morris, 1992, 1995). In many cases, teachers were expected to play a substantial role in developing materials to support the innovation. Lacking the time or the expertise to do this, teachers’ misgivings about a change to current practices would be reinforced.

Fifthly, school cultures, i.e. the shared values which guide the actions of staff, do not seem to support innovation. Given the hierarchical nature of relationships in Chinese societies (Cheng, 1995), much power in Hong Kong schools is centred on the principal. As Pennington (1995) points out, teachers generally work under conditions of low autonomy with little influence over strategic decisions. For example, the decision by individual schools on whether and when to implement TOC was almost always made by principals together with school supervisors, with teachers mainly powerless to influence this decision. Morris (1995) argues that the internal climate of Hong Kong schools is generally not conducive to supporting the implementation of curriculum innovations,

given that teachers rarely collaborate with each other and principals or senior staff are not always supportive of teachers. Morris (*ibid*) describes what often happens when recently trained teachers try to carry out innovative teaching methods:

They [innovative new teachers] often experience what is termed ‘reality shock’ whereby other teachers encourage them to conform to the prevailing school culture. The basic argument put to them is that while what they learnt at college/university is acceptable in theory, the real world of schools make it necessary for them to use teaching methods which are efficient for transmitting content and maintaining classroom control. (Morris, 1995, p. 116)

Such school cultures have a conservative effect which serves in many cases to maintain the existing status quo (cf. the teachers’ comments in 5.4.4).

3.4.2 *Activity Approach*

All three of the respondents drew parallels between TOC and a previous reform, the Activity Approach (AA). AA shares similar principles to TOC in that it is a child-centred approach aimed at promoting active and self-initiated learning through participation in purposeful activities (CDI, 1993). As with TOC, emphasis is placed on learning by doing rather than on instruction by the teacher. A small-scale pilot scheme for AA was carried out in 1972 and the scheme was expanded to other schools in 1975. In 1981 ED recommended the development of AA, especially in P1-P3 classes and allocated grants to encourage schools to adopt it. During the 1980s and 1990s, AA has been widely adopted with P1-P3 classes. In 1987, a joint research project between the Chinese University of Hong Kong and ED found that in AA classes students’ interest and participation in learning increased, whilst students’ academic achievement was comparable to non-AA classes.

One prominent feature of AA is that classes are seated in a group format with 5 or 6 desks joined together. This contrasts with the more traditional row by row format normally used by non-AA classes in primary schools. Other than the seating arrangements, it is not clear that AA has led to significant changes in teaching approaches. Anecdotal evidence (and opinions expressed by Lo, 1998) indicate that it is common for teachers to carry out traditional teaching but with pupils seated in the AA format. This creates the façade of implementation and pays lip-service to the rhetoric of student-centred teaching without obliging teachers to adapt their preferred teaching approaches. EC (1990) concludes that despite its usefulness the impact of AA on primary education has been limited.

The three respondents for my study had all been carrying out AA and, as I indicate in 5.2, perceived TOC to be a further development of AA.

3.4.3 Features of reform in Hong Kong

Morris, Lo & Adamson (2000) identify a number of features which characterise both the development of TOC and other attempts at reform in Hong Kong. Firstly, there is a tendency to justify reform by means of a critique of existing practices in schools, principally by use of terms such as teacher-centred, traditional, exam-oriented, passive pupils. Negative repercussions of such a strategy are to intensify opposition to a reform, demotivate teachers and fail to recognise previous good practices in schools.

Secondly, Morris *et al.*, (*ibid*) identify a lack of continuity in school reform in Hong Kong. TOC was preceded by a range of other innovations, in addition to AA. The proliferation of innovations has tended to create innovation overload in schools, particularly when innovations are often developed in isolation from one other and links between different innovation are not made clear (Clark *et al.*, 1999; Morris, 1995; 8.3.1). The lack of continuity of policy making reinforces the perception in schools that reforms are of a short term and ad hoc nature (Morris *et al.*, *op cit*). This feature is also related to a third and related aspect of a lack of coherence as it becomes evident to school personnel that different sectors of government have different interpretations of a reform and different (or competing) agendas (Morris, 1995).

Fourthly, educational reforms in Hong Kong have tended to be largely rhetorical in nature, with a focus on the broad intentions of reform and an absence of concrete operational details. Fifthly, assessment has tended to be the most resistant feature to reform, given the emphasis in Hong Kong on a meritocratic ideology, with fairness and objectivity the main features of the assessment process (Biggs, 1996c). Resistance to replacing essentially selective assessment mechanisms with more formative types of assessment (cf. 8.5.3) is exacerbated by the tendency in Hong Kong to view assessment as the last item to be addressed in the reform process. As was the case with TOC, the reform of the high stakes system at P6 (see 3.2) was deferred until eventually TOC lost its central position in the reform agenda (Morris *et al.*, *op cit*; 3.8).

In summary, during the last 20 years, there have been numerous attempts to introduce curriculum reform in Hong Kong but relatively few innovations have been successful or had a long-lasting impact on what goes on in schools. Morris (1995) summarises the somewhat negative state of curriculum innovation in Hong Kong as follows:

Teachers have been bombarded with new curriculum policies and innovations which are often unrealistic, vague or inadequately resourced. This has contributed to the development of a cynicism amongst teachers and principals, who have learnt that the safest strategy is to ignore most innovations or make the minimum adjustments where necessary. (Morris, 1995, p.120)

To conclude, the above discussion indicates that the antecedent conditions for the implementation of TOC are not particularly favourable. Policy making and implementation in Hong Kong has been characterised by the following factors: a history of unsuccessful curriculum improvement measures; innovation overload and discontinuity; resistance to fundamental changes in assessment; and cautious responses from schools, cynical about the duration of any new wave of reform.

3.5 The TOC initiative

3.5.1 Introduction

Having discussed aspects of the general educational context in Hong Kong which impact on TOC, I now proceed to discuss more specifically the TOC initiative itself. Below I discuss the origins of TOC, its rationale, the process of its development, its principles and its early implementation in schools. Selected aspects of the process of TOC development are analysed because these factors play an important role in affecting how schools and teachers will respond to the innovation.

3.5.2 Origins

The development of what was to become TOC was first formally publicised in EC (1990). This report highlighted the following main concerns about schooling in Hong Kong: the quality of teaching and learning of Chinese and English; the nature and suitability of the curriculum, particularly its failure to meet the needs of the full ability range of students, especially those at either end of the ability spectrum; the presence of too many discrete subjects resulting in fragmentation and compartmentalisation of the curriculum; and assessment practices focused too much on selection purposes. The EC proposed the development of a framework of attainment targets and related assessments initially covering the core subjects Chinese, English and Mathematics from primary 1 up to secondary 3 level, they recommended that the replacement of the public examinations at secondary 5 by the new form of assessment should not be pursued (EC, 1990). The name TTRA (Targets and Target-related Assessment) was used, the original nomenclature for what was later to be called TOC. At this stage it could be seen that the proposal seemed to focus mainly on targets and assessment.

As discussed in 3.4.4 above, one can identify here two recurrent features of curriculum reform in Hong Kong. Firstly, the framing of the reform in terms of a critique of current practices: declining language standards and failure to catering for individual learner differences. And secondly, the failure to tackle assessment issues in a whole-hearted, radical and holistic way, by not proposing that TTRA be extended as far as the high-stakes matriculation examinations at secondary 5 (students aged sixteen-seventeen years old).

3.5.3 *The process of curriculum development for TTRA/TOC*

In 3.4.1, I noted that curriculum development in Hong Kong generally approximates to R, D and D approaches, and this was indeed the case for TOC. A research and development team was located in the Institute of Language in Education (ILE), a semi-autonomous part of ED. The project started in January 1991 and reached its formal conclusion in August 1994 when various framework documents and reports were submitted to ED. The team was led by John Clark, director of the ILE assisted by two English language specialists from UK and Australia respectively and a mathematics/science specialist from USA. This core team thus comprised three language specialists and one member with expertise in maths and science, indicating something of a bias towards ELT. Only Clark had substantial working experience in Hong Kong, principally as an in-service teacher educator working with secondary school English teachers. None of them were able to speak Cantonese, nor read Chinese, nor were particularly familiar with the realities of the Hong Kong primary school environment. This had the following effects: the reliance on a group of overseas experts exacerbated tensions and ensured a low sense of ownership and commitment to change; there was a low level of perceived practicality; TOC was perceived as an attempt to redefine Chinese language education in terms of the precepts of English as a foreign language. Overall, the innovation was perceived as an attempt to perpetuate the colonial influence beyond 1997 (Morris *et al.*, 1996; Morris, Chan & Lo 1998).

The aims of the TOC curriculum development project were twofold. Firstly, to research and develop a cross-curricular framework of concepts and procedures to guide TOC

developments in each subject area. Secondly, to assist ED in the development for English of learning targets, programmes of study, assessment guidelines, exemplar learning and assessment tasks, bands of performance and reporting procedures (HKBLDF/ILE, 1994, p.2). In addition to the research fellows, the project personnel included seven experienced teachers seconded from local primary and secondary schools and two lecturers from the ILE. In addition to the core project personnel, various parties were invited to provide feedback on developments in the project. For example, teacher reference groups provided comments and feedback as did a similar group of teacher educators. In other words, there was some teacher participation but at a relatively low level and with limited influence (Carless, 1997a).

TOC was referred to as an 'initiative', rather than a project, curriculum or other term. Clark (1994) viewed TOC as a overall blueprint from which schools could develop their own school-based curriculum i.e. not a fidelity perspective (cf. 2.4.2, 8.4):

The TOC initiative is [not] a fully-worked out curriculum to be handed down to schools to implement ... It is a pragmatic framework of concepts and principles ... [for schools and teachers to] develop their own target-oriented curriculum in the light of their own contextual requirements. (Clark, 1994, p.1)

One can identify a conflict here between Clark's concept of curriculum development and that espoused by ED. Clark's notion is of providing an overall framework which sets the direction but allows schools and teachers to design and adapt the curriculum in ways that they see fit. As Morris (1999a) points out, ED conceived more of creating a standard product which could be disseminated to schools. Schools are more accustomed to the latter form of curriculum development and given some of their teachers' weaknesses in subject and professional knowledge (see 3.3) are arguably only in a few cases

developmentally ready to carry out Clark's suggested approach. As Morris, Chan & Lo (1997) observe, teachers became aware that they had neither the time nor the skills to develop appropriate resources, tasks and assessment items for school-based implementation of TOC.

Overall, the development of TTRA was largely controlled by the core group of four identified above, with teacher input being mainly in terms of providing feedback or performing relatively low level tasks, such as the design of exemplar tasks. Given the western backgrounds of the research fellows there were perceptions that the framework for TOC had drawbacks associated with an imported model (cf. 2.8.8; 3.4.2). Hau (1996), for example, perceived that TOC imitated much of the framework of the National Curriculum in England and Wales, although see Morris *et al.*, (1996) for a critical contrast between these two reforms. In addition, there were perceptions that the development of TOC exhibited a bias towards ELT, given the origins of TOC as a potential solution for fears about falling language standards (3.9.2) and the subject specialisms of the research fellows as indicated above.

3.6 The TOC framework of concepts

This section focuses on a discussion of the main features of the TOC framework of concepts. The TOC framework (Clark *et al.* 1994) outlines the principles of TOC in general terms with the aim of providing a conceptual basis for more specific planning at different age levels, referred to as key stages using similar terminology to the National Curriculum in England and Wales. ED also developed 'Programmes of Study' (see

summary in Appendix 1), for each key stage, which were intended to “provide practical guidelines to help teachers implement TOC” (Curriculum Development Council, 1995, p. 1). The interpretation and implementation of these guidelines and the principles outlined below remained largely in the hands of TOC textbook writers and primary school teachers.

3.6.1 *Constructivism*

TOC is based on a constructivist view of learning which views the learner as actively trying to construct an understanding of the world. Constructivism implies that learning occurs through the interaction between thoughts and experiences, and through the development of increasingly complex cognitive structures (Clark *et al.*, 1994). The principles of learning underlying constructivism form the basis of TOC and are summarised below based on ED (1992) and Clark *et al.*, (*op cit*):

- Learning involves the active construction of knowledge through processes of inquiry, thinking, problem-solving, creating, performing and communicating
- Learning involves a spiralling rather than a linear process, in this way frameworks of knowledge and skill are continually reorganised so as to accommodate new knowledge
- Learning is holistic and is most effective when tasks are undertaken as a whole, rather than broken down into discrete elements
- Learning occurs in a context of use and is most effective when conceptual content is thematically related.

This constructivist philosophy lies in contrast with the more transmissive orientation prevalent in Hong Kong as described in 3.2.3. One of the aims of TOC was to involve students more actively in the learning process.

3.6.2 *Targets*

A key element of the TOC framework at the planning stage is learning targets which set a common direction for learning in all schools in Hong Kong. The subject target for English is:

To develop an ever-improving capability to use English

To think and communicate

To acquire, develop and apply knowledge

To respond and give expression to experience

And within these contexts, to develop and apply an ever-increasing understanding of how language is organised. (ED, 1994a, p.4).

From the teacher perspective, Clark *et al.*, (1999) indicate that the existence of learning targets is generally well-received by teachers. The targets are mainly used by teachers in planning of schemes of work and teaching schedules. In their day to day teaching, it is reported that teachers generally make little reference to the learning targets (Clark *et al.*, *ibid*).

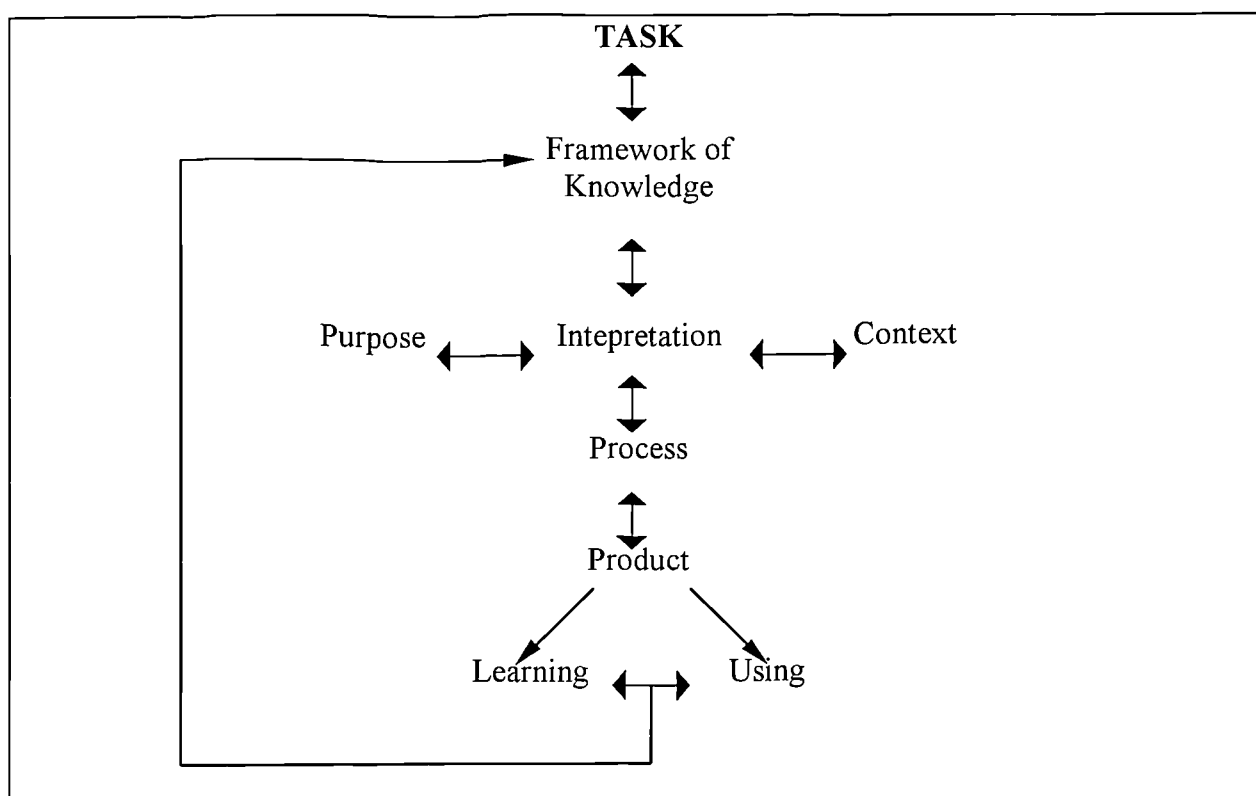
3.6.3 Learning tasks

The second main element of TOC comprises learning tasks, defined as “the purposeful and contextualised learning activities through which students progress towards the learning targets” (ED, 1994a, p.18). This feature is highlighted as being a key aspect of the classroom implementation of TOC. The TOC definition of task includes five elements as highlighted below (Clark *et al.*, 1994; ED, *op cit*):

- a *purpose* or underlying reason for doing the task, involving more than simply the display of knowledge or practice of skills
- a *context* in which the task takes place, which may be simulated, real or imaginary
- a *process* of thinking and doing required in carrying out the task, stimulated by the purpose and the context
- a *product* or the result of thinking and doing, which may be tangible or intangible
- a *framework of knowledge, strategy and skill* used in carrying out the task.

Figure 3.1 overleaf (Clark *et al.*, *op cit*, p.41) indicates the interactive nature of the process of carrying out a TOC learning task. This definition of task was an attempt to synthesise previous definitions of task and add to them perspectives of the TOC project team (Clark, personal communication 2/9/1996). The thesis does not seek to problematise this definition of tasks nor explore alternative conceptions as discussed, for example, in Nunan, (1989) or Skehan, (1996, 1998). A number of relevant distinctions do however, need to be made as they impact on the classroom observation for the study (4.5), the teacher understanding of tasks (5.2), the degree of general TOC implementation (6.3) and the specific implementation of task-based learning as defined by TOC (7.2).

Figure 3.1 The process of a TOC learning task

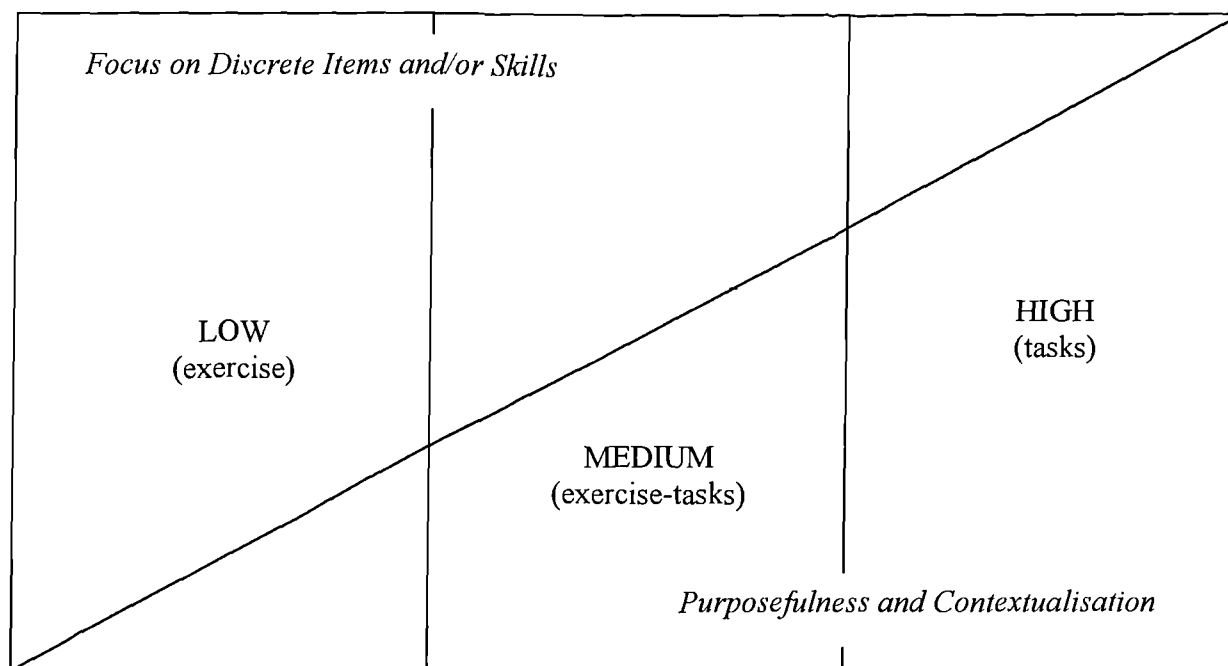


Skehan (1996) distinguishes between a strong form of task-based learning in which tasks are the *unit* of language teaching and everything else is subsidiary and a weak form of task-based learning in which tasks are an important part of language instruction but can be preceded by focused pre- or post-task instruction. The weak form of task-based learning is allied strongly with communicative approaches to language teaching and tends to be compatible with the production stage of the presentation-practice-production sequence, commonly used (and often criticised e.g. Lewis, 1996; Willis, 1996) in communicative methods. The TOC approach to task-based learning seems to be comparable with this weak form.

Under TOC, pre-task stages are represented by exercises defined as “learning activities that help acquisition of specific information and skills” (ED, 1994a, p.19). ED (*ibid*) does however acknowledge that it may be difficult in some instances to draw a clear distinction between tasks and exercises. Morris *et al.*, (1996) also point out the inadequacies of a bi-polar distinction between exercises and tasks, observing, “Given the fuzziness surrounding the conceptions of what constitutes a task, it is difficult for the researchers to state with certainty whether or not task-based learning is actually taking place” (p.114). My piloting for the current study independently reached a similar conclusion (see 4.5.4). Other TOC studies also indicated that teachers had difficulties in understanding what was meant by ‘task’. Lam, Wong, Wong & Lee (1996) found that teachers were unable to draw a distinction between learning exercises and learning tasks when asked in an open-ended question. Morris *et al.*, (1996) state similarly, “Teachers were reported to have a very unclear understanding of the nature of tasks as defined by the TOC literature and of how these differed, if at all, from the activities promoted by AA” (p.115). And with respect to classroom practice, Clark *et al.*, (1999) found that teachers often claimed to be carrying out tasks but were unable to substantiate this assertion in interview data, and the limited number of classroom observations for the study showed a mismatch between what teachers claimed and what was actually going on in the classroom.

For the purposes of the present study, given the weaknesses in the bipolar exercise-task distinction as argued above, the distinction between exercises and tasks is represented as a continuum as in figure 3.2 below Morris *et al.*, (1996) based on Littlewood (1993b).

Figure 3.2 Exercise-task continuum (Morris *et al.*, 1996), p.114



In this figure, the exercise-task continuum ranges from low on the left-hand side of the matrix to high on the right hand side. The extent of task-based learning present in a given lesson (see 4.5, 6.3, 7.2) is gauged, for the purposes of this study, by the application of the descriptors below (adapted from Morris *et al.*, 1996). ‘Low’ corresponds to an exercise primarily focused on the discrete practice of skills or sub-skills, usually in the absence of any context or real-life purpose beyond the practice of the given language items. Examples would be decontextualised grammar practice exercises, or structure drills in which there is only a subordinate focus on meaning. ‘Medium’ tasks tend to have some characteristics of both the ‘low’ and ‘high’ ends of the continuum. For example, they may involve the discrete practice of skills within a context or they may involve an information gap or exchange but in a relatively non-purposeful and non-contextualised way. ‘High’ corresponds to a task with a clearly defined purpose that relates to authentic real-life use of the language, with a clearly defined real, imaginary or

simulated context. Surveys, information gap or information exchange within a specified context might be example of such tasks. 'High' tasks may also provide for divergent outcomes qualitatively or quantitatively.

3.6.4 *Catering for learner differences*

In addition to tasks, the other key component of the implementation of TOC at the classroom level is catering for individual learner differences. TOC aims to respond to a perceived lack of differentiation in teaching, learning and assessment, "highlighting the fact that all students can learn well, given appropriate learning experiences, and that all students have ever-improving capabilities, though they learn at varying speeds and have different strengths and weaknesses" (Clark *et al.*, 1994. p. 10). ED (1994a) in a section entitled, 'Catering for student differences in teaching and learning', suggests three methods by which teachers may cater for student differences, namely: students do the same exercise or task but with varied input or support; additional support for less able students; and graded exercise/tasks to suit different learning styles or abilities. As noted in 3.3.3, individualised learning has not been a feature of education in Hong Kong, and for this facet of TOC to be implemented may represent a substantial shift in the nature of classroom learning. As Cheung, W.W. (1996) observes, "To cater for individual differences may add extra burden on teachers since our conventional classroom does not emphasise this" (p. 40). The perspective of the respondents on catering for individual learner differences is outlined in 5.3, their classroom implementation in 7.4.

3.6.5 TOC Assessment

Another main feature of the TOC framework involves target-related assessment, criterion-referenced against bands of performance. The TOC assessment system is designed to provide clear statements of what students can or cannot do and so enable reports of the progress towards the learning targets (Clark *et al.*, 1994). The fundamental purpose of target-oriented assessment is to promote student learning (Clark *et al.*, *ibid*). Through the assessment process, teachers are supposed to monitor the progress of individual students, determine their strengths and weaknesses and identify ways of helping them to improve (ED, 1994a). The three main processes for TOC assessment are outlined in TOC Assessment Guidelines (1995): planning learning and assessment activities e.g. scheme of work; recording evidence of learning through observation and judgements; and summarising and interpreting performance e.g. in reports to parents, school or ED. In 5.3, I indicate that the respondents perceived assessment as being a problematic aspect of TOC implementation.

3.6.6 Five fundamental ways of learning

The TOC framework indicated common ways of learning across subjects (Clark *et al.*, 1994, p.9), known as ‘five fundamental intertwining ways of learning’. These five ways are: *communicating* through receiving and sharing meaning; *inquiring* through questioning or testing hypotheses; *conceptualising* through organising knowledge and identifying patterns; *reasoning* through logical argument and by deducing or inferring conclusions; and *problem-solving*, including identifying, justifying and evaluating

solutions. In practice, it is quite difficult to identify the distinctions between these different features or observe them in the classroom.

3.6.7 *Classroom applications of concepts*

From the features described above, TOC teacher education has focused most on task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences. These were perceived as the two major aspects of the classroom implementation of TOC and as such are the focus of chapter 7. In contrast, targets are mainly an aspect of planning and evaluation, so are not directly observable in the classroom. Similarly, TOC assessment, recording and reporting tends also to be not directly observable in the classroom. As I indicate in 8.7.1, there are ambiguities surrounding the identification of the five fundamental ways of learning.

This sub-section has described the main components of the TOC framework for Hong Kong primary schools. In summary, TOC is a curriculum initiative which proposes to integrate, teaching, learning and assessment in a recursive manner. Pupils work towards *targets* by means of learning *tasks* and their performance is assessed through target-related *assessment*. In addition, TOC seeks to *cater for individual learner differences* and promote five so-called *fundamental ways of learning*. In 4.5.4.2, I indicate how these features were incorporated into the classroom observation schedule for the study.

3.7 Preparation and early implementation of TOC

3.7.1 Preparation for TOC (TTRA)

Piloting for TOC was carried out in twenty primary schools between September 1992 and May 1993 with P4 classes only. An ED-produced review indicated that the concept and spirit of TTRA were widely supported but that there were a number of major problems, namely: heavy workload for teachers; failure by teachers to adopt suitable teaching methods; lack of textbooks and teaching materials; lack of assessment guidelines and remedial measures; inadequacy of teacher education; lack of manpower and other resources; lack of understanding by the public; and an unrealistic implementation schedule (Advisory Committee Paper No1/1993). A parallel, and more limited review (ILE, 1993), found that teachers most favourable to TTRA tended to be both younger and more linguistically proficient than average. It concluded, “from our limited observations, it would appear that the TTRA pilot scheme has been unplanned, under-funded, under-resourced, inadequately supported, and above all under-prepared in terms of teacher education” (ILE, *ibid*, p.4). The resourcing issue was a particular problem, for example, the failure to provide materials ready for immediate classroom use (cf. 2.8.5).

The initial schedule for the implementation of TTRA was that P4 classes would start the new curriculum in May 1993, permitting some experimentation before a fuller implementation for all P1-5 classes in September 1993. The idea of changing the teaching approach towards the end of a school year was somewhat unrealistic. It has been suggested that the rationale behind this initial implementation schedule was for political reasons (Clark, personal communication, 2/9/1996) beyond the scope of this

thesis. On the 23rd April 1993, the Director of Education announced that TTRA had been “put on hold” because schools were not ready for implementation. He was quoted as saying that TTRA “is a very good concept and is widely supported. With hindsight we can say the implementation was a little hasty. We did not expect the amount of training to be insufficient from the schools’ and teachers’ point of view” (South China Morning Post, 24/4/1993). One immediate outcome of the deferred implementation was the setting up of an advisory committee (see 3.7.2) to make recommendations on the way forward for the initiative.

3.7.2 Advisory committee on TTRA/TOC

The remit of the advisory committee on TTRA was to develop measures to overcome problems identified in the initial review in 3.7.1 above, to suggest improvements to the framework and to propose a realistic implementation timeframe. The committee met between June and December 1993, publishing a restricted circulation report in January 1994. The advisory committee reaffirmed support for the spirit and intent of TTRA but identified the following major areas of concern: the unpopular image of TTRA; the practicability of the theoretical framework; the adequacy and effectiveness of teacher education; the availability, quality and amount of resource support; the nature, functions and practicability of TOC assessment; the need for effective publicity; the need for a realistic implementation plan (ED, 1994b). The first recommendation, adopted in July 1993, was the change of name from TTRA to TOC. The advisory committee described this as a “change in emphasis”; conceptually however, there was little change between TTRA and TOC (Clark *et al.*, 1999; Morris *et al.*, 1996). Morris *et al.*, (1997) indicate

that one difference was that TOC was perceived as being more flexible and amenable to change or adaptation than was the case with TTRA. In other words, there appeared to be a shift from a fidelity perspective towards a mutual adaptation approach (2.4). Other recommendations of the advisory committee were: a simplification of documentation to make things more readily comprehensible to teachers and parents; the clarification of the differences between TOC and existing practices; the involvement of more teachers in the development of TOC so as to better promote a sense of ownership; and the setting up of a monitoring committee to oversee the further development of TOC. With respect to a revised implementation schedule, primary schools were given some flexibility as to the pace and extent of change. According to ED figures, in 1995-6, 11% of schools started adopting TOC, in 1996-7 62% had started, in 1997-8 82%. By 1998-9 88% of schools claimed to be carrying out TOC, with the majority using it from P1-P4. Schools were provided with some incentives to be early implementers, such as one-off grants to purchase hardware or software resources.

3.8 Critique of TOC

I now attempt to draw some of the threads together into a summary and critique of the TOC initiative. TOC is based on generally accepted conceptions of 'good practice' e.g. constructivism, task-based learning, aligning teaching, learning and assessment. With respect to ELT, TOC has shared characteristics with communicative and task-based methodologies. I summarise TOC as targets plus communicative/task-based approaches plus target-oriented assessment. This can be seen as a 'strengthened' form of the communicative approach which as we have seen in 3.8, was the official, but generally not

implemented curriculum, since 1981. It was ‘strengthened’ in two ways, firstly by the targets which provide a common direction for all schools and secondly, by the inclusion of task-based assessment that aims to promote a beneficial washback effect through aligning what is tested with what is recommended to be taught in the classroom. In this way, it was hoped to overcome the common mismatch in Hong Kong between curriculum aims and assessment (see also 3.3.2, 3.8). Unfortunately, this aim does not seem to have achieved (Clark *et al.*, 1999) given the problems with TOC assessment (see 3.9.4), most notably the failure to tackle the mismatch between criterion-referenced and formative emphases in TOC as opposed to the prevailing mainly selective functions of assessment (3.2.3).

Secondly, I would like to discuss the extent and scope of change required by teachers for the TOC initiative. Morris *et al.*, (1996) suggest that TOC is “probably the most comprehensive and radical attempt at curriculum reform ever undertaken in Hong Kong” (p.240), arguing that if TOC is to be implemented faithfully, the following four changes are required amongst teachers: a movement from a transmissive to a constructivist conception of learning; a change in pedagogy, from whole-class, didactic, transmissive, textbook-centred towards individualised learning, facilitative and resource/task-based; a change in the concept of assessment, from summative, norm-referenced, competitive to formative, criterion-referenced, co-operative; and a movement from product-oriented to process-oriented. This casts doubt on the ‘compatibility’ of TOC as defined in 2.6.

TOC has also been criticised by teachers and curriculum developers e.g. Morris (1995), Morris *et al.*, (1997) as being complex, vague and abstract. Critics of TOC have pointed

out that the TOC explanatory documents focused on the intentions of the initiative rather than concrete examples of learning tasks and assessment procedures. How these intentions were to be implemented in the primary classroom were not made explicit. In addition, Morris *et al.*, (1996) note that critical comments of teachers have been interpreted as a reflection of the teachers' lack of understanding and the need to provide more in-service courses, it was assumed that the innovation itself was not the problem. Applying the attributes of innovation discussed in 2.6 to TOC, Morris (1995) characterises it as being very complex; not tried and tested; not operationalised in concrete terms; perceived by teachers as having few relative advantages and incompatible with their existing beliefs and practices. Although with respect to the last point, I show in chapter 5 how teachers A and C noted areas of congruence between TOC and their own classroom approaches. Morris (*ibid*) concludes that while its intentions were worthwhile, TOC "provides a very good case study of how not to try and change the curriculum" (p. 119).

The early stages of TOC development and implementation were influenced by a fidelity perspective as the Government and its representatives exhorted teachers in a somewhat doctrinal and literal manner (Clark *et al.*, 1999) to carry out the innovation. In the light of opposition and concerns raised by schools, a mutual adaptation perspective evolved during the process of TOC implementation. On the basis of their research study involving detailed classroom observation in twelve case study schools, Morris *et al.*, (1996) concluded that, "the pattern emerging was one of the teachers trying to assimilate TOC to their usual practices, rather than changing their practices to accommodate TOC" (p. 243). In the later periods of implementation, a laissez faire policy has emerged

whereby decisions as to how or to what extent to continue with TOC have been extensively devolved to schools (Clark *et al.*, 1999).

Finally, I would like to summarise my interpretation of the main strengths and weaknesses of the preparation and early implementation TOC initiative, based on the above discussion and drawing on Carless, (1997a, 1998, 1999a), Clark *et al.*, (1999), Morris *et al.*, (1996). The main successful features of early TOC implementation seemed to be as follows:

- TOC had a positive impact at the organisational level of schools in that teachers' professional development was enhanced through increased collaboration (Morris *et al.*, 1996). The planning and execution of TOC necessitated more sharing and teamwork, which has more general benefits beyond the specific reform. Teachers working collaboratively, planning, exchanging teaching ideas and developing their interpretation of TOC are powerful means for teacher development at both the individual and school level
- TOC has been used by principals or teachers as a vehicle for countering inertia and legitimising attempts to improve (Morris *et al.*, 1996). The introduction of TOC provides reformist principals or teachers with a rationale and support for more active and innovative teaching approaches, which otherwise might be opposed by more conservative colleagues (see also 5.4.4)
- There has been some flexibility and improvement in the modes of TOC teacher training and the move towards more school-based training seems logical (see 2.8.4)

- TOC seems to have had a generally positive effect on pupil motivation, with some teachers reporting more enjoyment and greater involvement from pupils (Clark *et al.*, 1999). At this stage, however, there is insufficient evidence to make any judgement about gains or losses in pupil learning outcomes
- The resourcing support for TOC has generally been quite good (except during the piloting stage, 3.7.1) as discussed in 2.8.5.

The less successful aspects of TOC early implementation are summarised as follows:

- The major problem in the early implementation of TOC seems to be the role of assessment in TOC. The failure to integrate TOC assessment with the high stakes testing mechanism at the end of P6 has negatively impacted on the anticipated role of assessment in the TOC framework. A further problem with TOC assessment has been ED's emphasis on the recording and reporting of information, which generated an excessive workload for teachers (see also 5.3)
- The degree of actual implementation of TOC is quite variable. Some teachers and some schools have developed a good understanding of TOC and are implementing it in spirit. Other schools have a less thorough understanding and are adopting the innovation in name, without there be any actual classroom evidence of the principles of TOC. Morris *et al.*, (1996) note that there is "a range of perceptions of its nature and purposes and of fundamental misunderstandings as to some of its components" (p.240) and point out that many teachers were unable to operationalise TOC concepts in the classroom, due to a limited understanding of the nature of the innovation itself

- Despite the progress in TOC teacher education mentioned above, there are perceptions that it was generally too short-term and transmissive, as discussed in 2.8.4
- Change strategies for TOC implementation have been largely top-down so that little ownership of the innovation was developed amongst teachers, particularly in the early stages. There is some tentative evidence that teachers are now beginning to develop more ownership of TOC (Clark *et al.*, 1999)
- There have been some criticisms of TOC as being culturally inappropriate (Carless, 1999c; 8.5)
- In addition, there have been concerns about the practicality of TOC at the school level (see also 5.4.5, 8.3.3). Teacher concerns have frequently been expressed about the complexity of TOC, its feasibility in large classes of and the conflicts between teacher's role and school or societal expectations of teachers
- From around early 1998 onwards³, there was a perception that TOC was no longer at the forefront of the government agenda, due to a policy of 'delabelling' whereby schools were no longer identified or funded according to whether they had adopted TOC (Morris, 1999a). The implicit withdrawal of support for TOC led to uncertainty in schools and a sense of betrayal from those most committed to its implementation (see also 8.3).

3.9 Summary of chapter

This chapter has provided an overview of selected aspects of the Hong Kong education system which impact on the implementation of the TOC initiative. In the first half of the chapter, the wider educational context has been discussed through an outline of education

in Hong Kong and a number of its key features, such as the school system, language in education and the role of ED. Discussion is then focused more specifically on the primary school learning context, curriculum development in Hong Kong, primary school English teachers and the primary school English curriculum. The second half of the chapter begins by outlining and critiquing strategies for curriculum innovation in Hong Kong. I then discuss the origins, development, principles and early implementation of TOC. The chapter concludes with a critique of TOC and a summary of its strengths and weaknesses.

CHAPTER 4. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

In 2.8, I discussed the factors which affect the implementation of curriculum innovations. A number of these factors, for example, teacher attitudes, teacher training, and teachers' understanding of the innovation highlight the central role of the teacher in the implementation or remoulding of curriculum innovations. Following from this, the focus of the study is on teachers' perspectives on TOC. This chapter describes and justifies the design of the study and indicates its focus on teacher behaviours and opinions related to the implementation of the TOC. The chapter places the study within a primarily qualitative paradigm, indicates why a case study approach was chosen and describes the three data collection methods of classroom observation (4.5), interviews (4.6) and attitude scale (4.7). The central focus of the study is to explore how three teachers in different schools were implementing (or not implementing) TOC in their P1 and P2 classrooms and gauge the teacher perception of issues emerging from the classroom observation for the study. The specific objectives of the study are stated in 1.4 and the research questions are listed in 4.4.

4.2 Research paradigm

I now consider briefly the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms and situate this thesis within a mixed-method design, albeit with a primarily qualitative focus. The extent to which the quantitative and qualitative paradigms are distinct or overlapping has been much discussed (e.g. Brannen, 1992; Bryman, 1988, 1992). Quantitative researchers characteristically isolate and define variables, which are linked together to

frame hypotheses and then tested on data. Within this positivistic approach, researchers are seeking to extrapolate from samples to general populations. Such an approach has its limitations however, in dealing with a topic with embedded complexities, such as curriculum implementation. In contrast, the qualitative researcher looks through a wide lens searching for patterns and relationships between less clearly defined concepts. The qualitative researcher is not seeking to extrapolate to a wider sample, but to focus on description, explanation and analysis, so as to interpret and understand behaviours. The qualitative researcher accepts that truth is multi-faceted and context-specific. As McCracken (1988) points out, “qualitative work does not survey the terrain, it mines it” (p.17). Qualitative research seems most appropriate when the research issue is exploratory in nature and the issues being put to informants may require complex, discursive replies (Brannen, 1992).

A naturalistic research design was chosen with an emphasis on observing, describing, interpreting and exploring events in the complex real world setting of the classroom, via a case study approach. The teachers implementing TOC were observed in the natural context of the classroom on the basis that behaviour is largely shaped by contextual factors and what teachers do is most appropriately examined in this natural classroom setting. Teachers’ actions in the classroom may or may not match their stated opinions. For example, teachers may express positive attitudes towards an innovation but not implement it in the classroom (see 2.8.3). In order to probe the relationship between actions and opinions with the aim of strengthening the internal validity (4.3.3) of the study, a variety of procedures were employed namely, classroom observation (4.5), semi-

structured interviews (4.6) and an attitude scale (4.7). The classroom observation generated both quantitative and qualitative data, the interviews generated qualitative data, whilst quantitative data was collected from the attitude scale. The research design for this study thus involved mixed methods, through which it was hoped to utilise the strong points of each paradigm and build a valid and reliable, or using terminology favoured by qualitative researchers, credible and dependable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) picture of the process of TOC implementation in three different school settings.

A number of purposes of mixed-method research are outlined in Greene, Caracelli, & Graham (1989), Rossman & Wilson (1994), Waysman & Savaya (1997):

- *expansion*, seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different components of the inquiry
- *development*, seeks to use the results of one method to inform the development of the other method
- *initiation*, seeks to generate new lines of thinking by searching for provocative, paradoxical or contradictory findings
- *complementarity* seeks elaboration, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method
- *triangulation* seeks convergence and corroboration of results from the different methods.

Different data sets were analysed in order to probe more deeply the phenomenon under discussion, in a similar way to expansion and complementarity. In addition, methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1989) was used so that different methods were

used to investigate the same phenomenon (see 4.3.3). In short, the reasons for choosing a mixed research design for this study were to strengthen the validity and reliability of the study.

4.3 Case study research model

4.3.1 The nature of case studies

This section outlines some of the main features of case studies as a research strategy. The term strategy is used because case study is not a research method, but a choice of object to be studied - the chosen object is the case (Stake, 1994). Case study methodology is eclectic, drawing on various techniques and procedures, including observation, interview, field notes and documentary analysis (Adelman, Jenkins & Kemmis, 1980). As a form of naturalistic inquiry, it shares traits in common with ethnography (see also 4.5.2), defined as “the work of describing a culture” (Spradley, 1980, p. 66). As Nunan (1992) observes, case studies are generally more limited in scope than ethnography which usually entails long-term immersion in the community or setting being studied.

There is some diversity of opinion about what constitutes a case study. The following perspectives on case study are extracted from the literature to provide a basis for the definition used in this study:

- “An intensive holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, 1988, p. 16)

- “An empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 13)
- Case study is “the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a real-life context” (Yin, 1994 p. 1)
- Case studies have the following four main characteristics (Merriam, 1988):
 - they are *particularistic*, focusing on a specific situation or phenomenon
 - they are *descriptive*, providing a rich “thick” description of a phenomenon under study, thick description, a term originating in anthropology means a complete, literal description of a cultural phenomenon (Geertz, 1973)
 - they are *heuristic*, helping to illuminate the phenomenon being studied
 - they are *inductive*, developing theory grounded in multiple data sources.

In an attempt to condense what I perceive as the key elements of the above discussion, I define case study as an intensive holistic empirical investigation of a single phenomenon within its natural real-life context, in this case the phenomenon of the classroom implementation of TOC.

4.3.2 *Advantages and disadvantages of case study approaches*

The potential advantages and disadvantages of a case study approach are now summarised. The advantages, developed mainly from Adelman *et al.*, (1980), Cohen & Manion (1994), are sixfold. Firstly, case study data is ‘strong in reality’, down-to-earth, attention-holding and related to the reader’s own experience; it encourages readers to

make comparisons with their own experiences. Secondly, case studies present information in a publicly accessible format which is often more vivid than other types of academic report. Thirdly, the subtlety and complexity of the case is explored holistically within its context, providing scope for analytic generalisation, building or generating theory. Fourthly, case studies recognise the complexity and embeddedness of social truths; they can represent conflicts or discrepancies between participants and offer support to alternative interpretations. Fifthly, case studies provide rich thick description which permits interpretation and re-interpretation. Sixthly, case studies are 'a step to action'; they begin in a world of action and contribute to its further development. Case studies have the most to offer teachers (and perhaps also teacher educators) because of their basis in the natural setting i.e. classrooms so they can contribute to existing theory or practice. The case studies reported in this thesis: acknowledge the complexity of the classroom context and processes; the varied interpretations which can be placed upon classroom events; and the potential of case study data to provide insights which can be directly applied by teachers and/or teacher educators.

The potential disadvantages of a case study approach are summarised below based on Cohen & Manion (1994), Hitchcock & Hughes (1996), and are addressed elsewhere in this chapter as indicated by cross-references. Firstly, there is need for great caution with respect to generalisability (see 4.3.5) as the case is limited to the context in which it is studied. Secondly, case studies have been criticised for a lack of methodological rigour for example, case studies are often defined (cf. 4.3.1) in terms of what they are not, non-numerical, non-experimental rather than what they are (Atkinson & Delamont, 1985). Thirdly, because of the prominent role of the researcher in data collection, there is a

problem of bias (4.3.11), subjectivity may threaten validity (cf. 4.3.3, 4.3.5). Fourthly, given the extended contact with the informants, there is a danger of emotional involvement on the part of the researcher, this may threaten internal validity (cf. 4.3.3). Fifthly, it may be difficult to conceal the identity of the respondents which may cause ethical problems (see 4.2.10). Lastly, case studies are time-consuming and labour intensive.

4.3.3 *Internal validity*

Internal validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings accurately capture the phenomenon under investigation. For this study, internal validity denotes the extent to which the findings represent a true picture of the TOC classrooms of the three teacher respondents, in terms of the individual classroom processes in the implementation of TOC and the teachers' opinions and attitudes towards the innovation. Given that the focus of this study is on the teachers' behaviours and opinions, the focus is on the teacher reality of TOC implementation rather than an outsider perspective, in other words, what the innovation means for the teachers, how they interpret and implement it and the rationale for their actions.

As Lincoln & Guba (1985) observe, validity in qualitative research concerns the representation of the multiple sets of mental constructions made by those under investigation. The reconstruction of these interpretations should be credible to the informants, the original constructors of these multiple realities. In this case, the findings should make sense to the three teachers. Instead of the term internal validity, Guba &

Lincoln (1989) use the term credibility, “the match between the constructed realities of respondents (or stakeholders) and those realities as represented by the evaluator and attributed to various stakeholders” (p. 237).

For this study, the four following strategies, developed from Lynch (1996) and Merriam (1988) were used to strengthen the internal validity of the study. Firstly, *triangulation*, defined as “the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon” (Denzin, 1990, p. 592) was employed. The use of multiple methods of data collection (classroom observation, interview and attitude scale) enabled me to capture different perspectives of the phenomenon under investigation, that is my interpretation of the classroom data, the teacher perspective from the interviews and quantitative data on teacher beliefs from the attitude scale. In addition, there was also data triangulation through repeated observations of the phenomenon under investigation, namely the three cycles of observation (see 4.5.3) and the series of interviews (see 4.6.4) across the three teachers. Secondly, member checks were carried out, presenting interpretations and tentative findings to the respondents and soliciting their opinion. The summative and post-analysis interviews (see 4.6.4) were one of the main means for carrying out this strategy and enabled modifications to be made to the emergent findings. Thirdly, internal validity was enhanced through peer examination - soliciting the views of colleagues and teachers on the emerging findings and issues on a regular and informal basis. Two Hong Kong Chinese colleagues with experience in primary school teaching, TOC teacher education and school-based research provided regular feedback on issues emerging from the study. Their views were particularly

helpful in offering guidance in issues concerning the identification of high, medium and low tasks as discussed in 7.2 and 7.3. Fourthly, disconfirming checks were carried out, i.e. the search for data that would disconfirm working hypotheses (Cronbach, 1975). Disconfirmation occurred in the following ways. Firstly, as a function of the drafting and redrafting of the thesis, unconvincing or irrelevant arguments were amended or discarded, for example, in the model described in 8.1. Secondly, working hypotheses were disconfirmed during member checking e.g. when teacher A disconfirmed that discipline problems were correlated with high ability (cf. 6.2.2). Thirdly, in the iterative process of moving from the primary data to the interpretations and analysis, points were refined or discarded as appropriate.

4.3.4 *Reliability*

Reliability refers to whether the findings are consistent and replicable, in other words if another researcher followed the same procedures would they arrive at similar results. As Guba & Lincoln (1981) point out, “Since it is impossible to have internal validity without reliability, a demonstration of internal validity amounts to a simultaneous demonstration of reliability” (p.120). Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that instead of the term reliability, alternatives such as ‘dependability’ or ‘consistency’ may be more appropriate for the qualitative paradigm. Qualitative researchers tend to view reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting studied rather than the literal replicability across different observations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The following techniques may enhance the dependability of qualitative case study research:

- a clear explanation of the assumptions and theory behind the study, ethical relationships between researcher and respondents (4.3.9), the basis for selection of respondents (see 4.2.8) and the social context (chapter 3) from which data were collected (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984)
- the use of a case study protocol outlining the procedures to be used in the study (4.3.11)
- triangulation (see 4.3.3 above) strengthens reliability in addition to internal validity
- an audit trail: description of how data were collected, how categories were derived (see 4.8) and how decisions were made during the research, so that “other researchers can use the original report as an operating manual by which to replicate the study” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p.216).

4.3.5 *External validity and generalisability in case studies*

External validity refers to the extent to which the findings are generalisable beyond the immediate context in which they occur. Qualitative case study research, however, is not seeking universal laws of human behaviour, instead it is focusing on individual interpretations of a phenomenon. Given the particularistic nature of case studies, they tend to lead less clearly to generalisation to a wider sample when compared with experimental research conducted according to standard sampling procedures. In case study research, it is neither possible nor the aim to extrapolate to wider populations. As Stake (1988) points out, the major preoccupation of case study is with the understanding of the particular case, a thorough understanding of its uniqueness and its complexity. In qualitative educational research there is however, a need to present findings that carry

implications outside the immediate context being studied. Bearing this in mind, Eisner (1991) points out that although the logic of random statistical sampling is sound, it does not equate to the reality of daily life, where we learn lessons from events that are ad hoc episodes or single-shot case studies, rather than units constituting a random sample. Human beings tend to recognise the similarities and differences between events and transfer those elements which are applicable to a different situation. Eisner (*ibid*) goes on to argue that in qualitative studies the researcher can generalise but it is more likely that readers will determine whether the research findings fit the situation in which they work; Woods (1996) refers to this as ‘dynamic triangulation’. Guba & Lincoln (1982) prefer the term ‘fittingness’ and argue that the degree to which the situation under study matches other situations provides a more realistic way of treating generalisability of qualitative research rather than more classical methods of extrapolation. Goetz & LeCompte (1984) use the terms ‘comparability’ referring to the degree to which “components of a study - including the units of analysis, concepts generated, population characteristics, and settings - are sufficiently well described and defined that other researchers can use the results of the study as a basis for comparison” (p. 228).

Three strategies for improving the generalisability of case study findings, suggested by Merriam (1988), have been used in the study. Firstly, providing a thick description so that readers interested in transferability have sufficient information on which to make a judgement. Secondly, I have conducted a multi-site analysis, albeit only with a small sample of three teachers. Thirdly, I have discussed the typicality of the cases, that is a

comparison with others of the same class, so that readers can make comparisons with their own situations (see 4.2.8).

4.3.6 Multiple case study design

A multiple-case design involves studying more than one case within the same research project (Yin, 1994). The advantages of the multiple-case approach include the following. By studying multiple cases, one has the potential to make comparisons between the cases and to test hypotheses derived from one case on another. This may help to facilitate analytic generalisation, by which a researcher strives to generalise a particular set of results to a broader theory (see also 4.3.5). Multiple-case designs may strengthen the possibility that findings may be generalised to the class that they represent. An interpretation based on data from several cases may be more convincing than that based on a single case. As Miles & Huberman, (1984) state, “By comparing sites or cases, one can establish the range of generality of a finding or explanation, and at the same time, pin down the conditions under which that finding will occur” (p.151).

Wolcott (1992), however, argues that a study of multiple cases reduces the amount of time that can be devoted to them and so may weaken rather than strengthen the study in that the depth of the research may be sacrificed. He prefers the method of studying one case in depth rather than a multiple case study design. For this study, the rationale for choosing a multiple case approach was both practical and theoretical. On the practical side, it was felt that a single case study might place undue pressure on the teacher being studied in terms of concentrated attention, time and associated extra workload. Also, the

study itself could be jeopardised by circumstances outside my control e.g. if the teacher changed jobs or became ill. From the perspective of a teacher educator, I was also interested in observing more than one teacher in different settings. The practicability of carrying out the study within the constraints of a full-time lecturing load was also a factor which needed to be borne in mind. From the theoretical perspective, Yin (1994) states that a multiple-case approach is particularly useful for the analysis of school innovations as one can investigate the progress of the innovation at different sites. By comparing data across cases, one can increase the potential for the development of a general theory of innovation or a theory relevant to the specific innovation. The scope for the generalisation of findings is usually greater in a multiple-case design. This thesis only has a case sample of three, which somewhat limits the multiplicity of the cases but this allowed the cases to be analysed in greater depth than would have been the case if a larger number of sites had been included.

4.3.7 Sample and access to the field

The method and selection of the three participants who agreed to take part in the study are described next. The research design, comprising mainly classroom observation and interviewing was potentially threatening to teachers so a cordial personal relationship between researcher and informants was essential. The teachers taking part in the study would need most of the following characteristics:

- confident and articulate in English
- warm classroom atmosphere, positive teacher-pupil relationships
- willingness to take part in a research study of this nature

- some interest in TOC and potential for uptake of the innovation.

With regard to the last point, the uptake of the innovation was one of the research foci so it seemed desirable to study teachers who were at least attempting to implement TOC in some way. Observation of traditional lessons or non-implementation of TOC would have contributed less to the research questions for the study.

Potential informants were sought in the nine month period preceding the commencement of data collection, via personal or professional contacts. In tandem with the piloting for the classroom observation (see 4.5.4), teachers were observed and their suitability was gauged against the criteria outlined above. Some teachers were deemed not suitable, according to these criteria, others were viewed as suitable but were unwilling to take part because of concerns about workload or pressure. Eventually, three potentially information-rich informants agreed to take part in the study. Teacher A had been a participant on two in-service HKIEd courses on which I had taught her. The status of teacher B is discussed in 4.3.9 below. I had met teacher C at a TOC seminar a few months prior to the commencement of the study and she had expressed feelings of isolation at being the only English teacher implementing TOC in her school, so welcomed the opportunity for further professional contact.

The sample, as discussed above, were to some extent self-selected. It is therefore quite possible that the respondents may have certain characteristics than are not universally present in the wider sample of which they are a part. It is suggested that they may be rather more confident, with a higher standard of English, a higher level of professional

commitment and a greater acceptance of TOC and its principles than average members of the primary school English teaching workforce. This provides a further rationale for the attitude scale (see 4.7) which enabled the attitudes of the three case study teachers to be compared with a wider sample of primary school teachers.

The process summarised above contains elements of purposeful sampling, defined by Patton (1990) as being the selection of information rich cases from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the research study. Patton lists fifteen types of purposeful sampling. This study does not fit neatly into any of these categories but contains elements of typical case sampling (the schools seem to be quite typical, although the teachers have some typical and some untypical characteristics as discussed above), maximum variation sampling (there is variation between the schools and the teachers although there was no attempt to maximise this variation), opportunistic sampling (it was necessary to take advantage of what research opportunities became available) and convenience sampling (geographical convenience was a minor factor in that schools needed to be within reasonable travelling distance from my office so as to facilitate regular classroom observation).

4.3.8 *Participant observation*

I took the role of a participant observer, primarily an observer but also able to take part in lessons in some small ways, for example, to support or encourage pupils when they were carrying out individual, pair or group work. My involvement in lessons was, however, very minimal as I did not wish to contaminate the data in any way (see also 8.7.2) and

needed to be focused on the completion of the observation instrument (4.5). It was felt that participant observation was more appropriate than non-participant observation so that I could at least contribute something to the teaching and learning process, rather than amassing research data but offering nothing in return. Atkinson & Hammersley (1994) point out that the dichotomy of participant or non-participant observation is too superficial and prefer the use of the following four categorisations – complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, complete participant. Although this categorisation cannot capture the finer degrees of possible roles adopted, it seems to fit my study reasonably appropriately in that I can be identified as ‘observer as participant’, my primary role is to observe but I also participate occasionally where appropriate.

4.3.9 *Ethical issues*

Simons (1989) in a discussion of ethics in educational case study research discusses the issues of confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent. Confidentiality relates to the fact that although researchers know the source of information, they do not make this connection public. This aspect of research ethics is particularly significant when the interviewee is in a powerful or politically sensitive position or when controversial, intimate or discrediting information is being shared. Although these issues seemed not particularly likely to apply to this study, the informants were nonetheless advised that their confidentiality was guaranteed. Similarly, anonymity refers to the fact that the identity of informants should not be revealed. For the study, respondents were advised that the thesis and any publications arising from the study would not use their real names and that the identity of the schools would not be disclosed. Informed consent is defined

by Diener & Crandall (1978) as procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in a study after being fully informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decision. In this study, respondents were informed that the study was to form part of my doctoral thesis on the topic of TOC implementation. It was explained that there would be a certain amount of additional workload generated for them, particularly the interviews (see 4.6). The three informants agreed to participate on this basis. The preparation of a written agreement to incorporate these issues was considered, e.g. Code of Ethics of Australian Association for Research in Education (2000). Its use was rejected, however, on the grounds that a written contract might seem overly formal and detract from the cordial relationships which I sought to establish with the informants.

Manipulating the classroom situation would be a potential breach of research ethics. As the study is a naturalistic one, no attempt was used to manipulate the classroom situation in any way. Teachers were specifically asked to teach their class in their normal way as the stated purpose of my research was to examine what was happening in 'real TOC lessons'. Additionally, care was taken to minimise the disruption to the respondents normal school duties. I accepted that at times the respondents would not be able to exchange more than social greetings with me before and/or after lessons. I was aware that the life of a teacher is a busy one and endeavoured not to put too much of a burden on my informants.

Another ethical issue concerned a possible role conflict in the relationship between myself and case study teacher B. In addition to the researcher-respondent relationship

there was another professional connection in that teacher B was also a participant in the HKIEd evening certification course for untrained teachers on which I was teaching her. As part of the course, participants are advised and assessed on two English lessons carried out in their school. I supervised teacher B for these visits once between the first and second cycles of observation, and secondly shortly before the third cycle of observations. Care was taken to announce these visits clearly as course visits and any observations from these visits were not used as research data. The dual relationship between teacher B and myself represented a potential ethical dilemma in terms of the division between the role of assessing teaching and observing teaching as a researcher. Given the difficulties in locating informants alluded to in 4.3.7 above, it was decided that despite this potential problem it was acceptable to invite teacher B to take part in the study. I explore the issue of observer paradox and the extent to which the status of teacher B may have affected the research data in 8.7.6.

4.3.10 Bias and subjectivity

Researcher bias and subjectivity has long been viewed as a threat to the validity and reliability of qualitative case study. As Silverman (1985) puts it, “The critical reader is forced to ponder whether the researcher has selected only those fragments of data which support his argument” (p.140). There are a number of strategies which qualitative researchers employ to mitigate this threat. Bogdan & Biklen (1998) indicate that by spending considerable time collecting detailed information in the field, qualitative researchers are forced to confront their superficial prejudices. Additionally, the researcher aim is not to pass judgement but to add to knowledge on a topic. The worth of

a study is not on whether it proves a point but whether it generates description, understanding or theory (Bogdan & Biklen, *ibid*).

Olesen (1998) suggests that a major way of facing possible researcher bias is for the researcher to develop sufficient reflexivity to enable the data to overcome any potential prejudices or biases. Rather than provoking bias, previous knowledge and experiences can be used to guide data collection, understanding and interpretation (Olesen, *ibid*). Reflexivity acknowledges the complexity of natural phenomena and accepts that multiple interpretations of reality may all be equally valid. For this study, the researcher employed the strategies discussed in 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 to reduce the impact of potential bias and enhance the validity and reliability of the study.

4.3.11 Summary of case study rationale

Summarising the discussion so far, a multi-site case study approach was chosen in order to focus on naturally occurring real-life events as they unfolded in the classroom setting. The sample of three teachers enabled relatively intensive study involving both classroom observation and interview data over the course of a school year. This study of TOC implementation over an extended period of time facilitated the probing of what the teachers were doing in the classroom and why and to relate this to their attitudes and perceptions about TOC.

Case studies involve developing an understanding of a phenomenon from the participants' viewpoint. As indicated in 1.2 and 2.8, teachers are the individuals who will

decide to implement faithfully, adapt, ignore or reject a curriculum innovation. A major element of this thesis is therefore to enable the teacher perspective on TOC to be highlighted. The case studies do this by focusing on the teacher classroom behaviour, attitudes and opinions as they relate to TOC. They permit an in-depth description and analysis of these areas through use of mixed-methods (see 4.3) and multiple data collection instruments.

In addition, case study seems to be a suitable method for studying innovation because as shown in 1.2. and 2.8, too little is known about how innovations are actually tackled in the classroom in the implementation phase. An in-depth focus on implementation can enable the development of insights into how teachers are carrying out or not carrying out an innovation. Hypotheses or analytic generalisations may be developed (see 4.2.6). As Gummesson (1991) indicates, case study is particularly suitable within the area of the management of change because “the change agent works with cases” (p.73). The case study protocol presented in tabular form below summarises and cross-references the design and procedures of the case study model used for this study.

Table 4.1 Summary case study protocol

Purpose	To describe and analyse the process of TOC implementation in three primary classroom settings in order to verify or develop TOC-specific or more widely applicable theories relevant to the implementation of innovations
Informants	Three primary school English teachers working in different schools, teaching P1 or P2 implementing TOC
Research questions	The research questions are listed in 4.4
Data collection procedures	Data collection for each informant is through: <i>Classroom observation</i> of 5-6 consecutive lessons at three different

	times in the school year A series of 6 semi-structured <i>interviews</i> An <i>attitude scale</i> administered both at the beginning and at the end of the classroom observation
Data collection timetable	The data collection timetable is outlined in tables 4.2 and 4.3
Data analysis	Data reduction, coding, categorising, conclusion drawing (see 4.8)
Data re-checking and verification of findings	Determining and establishing internal validity; seeking counter evidence and verifying or disproving findings

4.4 Research Questions

The research questions (RQs) which formed the focus of the study are outlined below:

Attitudes

RQ1 What are the teachers' general attitudes towards English teaching and learning and specific attitudes towards TOC?

Understanding and implementation

RQ2 To what extent do the teachers understand TOC principles?

RQ3 To what extent do the teachers perceive that they are teaching according to TOC principles and to what extent are they *actually* teaching according to TOC principles?

RQ 4 What strategies are the teachers using to implement TOC and what is the rationale for these strategies?

Management of change

RQ 5 What is the extent of change prompted by TOC?

RQ 6 What are the facilitating and inhibiting factors in the management of change for TOC?

RQ 7 What are the implications for the management of change?

Below I discuss the methods used to explore these research questions. A pilot replication of the *entire* case study process was not carried out in order to devote sufficient attention to the piloting of the individual instruments. Operational decisions were a function of the piloting and are referred to throughout the following sub-sections, most notably in 4.5.4, 4.6.3 and 4.7.4.

4.5 Classroom Observation

4.5.1 Nature and Purposes

Croll (1998) defines systematic classroom observation as a research method which uses structured observation procedures to gather data on patterns of behaviour and interaction in classrooms. There are two main schools of classroom observation research, a quantitative tradition (e.g. Croll, *ibid*) and a qualitative ethnographic one (e.g. van Lier, 1988), as discussed in 4.5.2 below. Croll (*op cit*) describes six main purposes to systematic classroom observation:

1. to provide a description of features of classrooms
2. to measure teacher effectiveness
3. to monitor teaching approaches
4. to monitor individuals
5. for teacher development e.g. action research
6. for initial training of teachers.

For this study purposes 1 and 3 were the most relevant ones. With respect to the former, the classroom observation sought to identify the main features of the classroom teaching of the three case study teachers (5.3). With respect to the latter, it sought to investigate

the extent to which teachers were using approaches consistent with TOC principles (6.3).

Hitchcock & Hughes (1995) comment that the value of classroom research is that it can uncover the 'black box' of the classroom in order to discover the factors which shape and influence pupils' experiences of school and classroom life. As Nunan (1991) observes, "There is no substitute for direct observation as a way of finding out about language classrooms" (p.76). In a similar vein, Allwright & Bailey (1991) discuss how classroom observation in ELT can lead to a fuller understanding of the language classroom and what goes on there. In other words it can provide information on what teachers and pupils actually do in the classroom as opposed to what administrators, teacher educators and syllabi advise them to do. This underlies a further motivation for the classroom observation in the current study, namely to gauge the extent to which teachers are actually teaching according to TOC principles, and to identify what strategies they are using to cope with the innovation and the rationale for their actions (see also 4.5.3).

4.5.2 Approaches

Before outlining the rationale and procedures for the classroom observation, I discuss briefly some approaches to classroom research of relevance to the current study. A number of aspects of classroom interaction have been studied, such as questioning techniques e.g. Banbrook & Skehan (1989); Wu (1993) and error correction, e.g. Chaudron (1987), Tsui (1985). Both quantitative methods, for example, through tallying 'moves' and quantitative or qualitative analyses of transcripts have been employed within such approaches. The current study had broader aims than these specific foci.

Another approach discussed in van Lier (1988) and Watson-Gegeo (1988) is ethnography, a qualitative, process-oriented means of exploring what goes on in the classroom. It has its basis in anthropology whereby the observer attempts to document and understand the behaviour of people within a culture. Its advantage in classroom research is that it treats the classroom as a cultural entity (cf. 2.8.8) and can generate insights not readily available through other more superficial methods. Its disadvantage is that its long-term nature makes it expensive and time-consuming. The current study utilises some elements of the ethnographic tradition in terms of its qualitative longitudinal aspects but is somewhat less long-term and in-depth than most ethnographic studies, although see Holliday (1997) for an alternative perspective on ethnography.

Other approaches to classroom observation are also relevant to this thesis. Within ELT, probably the most well-known scheme for classroom observation is the COLT scheme (Allen, Frohlich & Spada, 1984; Spada & Frohlich, 1995). This observation system was developed in an attempt to distinguish communicative classrooms from those that are more teacher-centred and form-focused. COLT consists of two parts. Part A, completed in real-time, describes classroom events at the level of episode and activity. Part B, completed retrospectively from tape-recordings, analyses the communicative features of verbal exchanges between teachers and students or among students during each activity. Despite the care taken in its development, the COLT scheme does not seem to have had a major impact on ELT research or practice because it does not capture the range of variables present in a variety of classrooms and reflects a view of communicative language teaching, prevalent in Canada in the 1970s (Skehan, personal communication,

17/12/1998). Furthermore, due to its relative complexity and the need for both real-time and post-lesson recording, the COLT observation schedule was not considered appropriate for my study as it would have made it difficult for me to collect open-ended qualitative data concurrently (4.5.4.4). A number of categories were derived from the COLT scheme, however, as described in 4.5.3 below.

Van Lier (1988) has three criticisms of the use of single observation schemes. Firstly, the development of categories is based on theoretical or ideological beliefs so that items of interest that do not fit into the categories are insufficiently analysed. Secondly, the schemes focus merely on directly observable, countable elements, tending to provide a false degree of objectivity. Thirdly, they fail to address adequately the complexity of classroom interaction, for example, contextual elements. One way of countering these criticisms is by collecting both quantitative and qualitative classroom data. Foster (1996) mentions a number of advantages of such mixed approaches in that quantitative data can provide information on frequency, duration and intensity whilst qualitative data complements this by providing thick description which explores meanings and interpretations. Explanatory qualitative data may be useful in interpreting numerical quantitative data. Spada (1987) used this approach by using COLT in tandem with qualitative data to provide additional information on one of the categories (activity type) in the schedule. In view of these points, for the current study it was decided to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, so as to build up a richer and deeper picture of TOC innovation through a complementary use of the two paradigms.

4.5.3 *Rationale and procedures*

As argued in 3.4, there is often a mismatch between the intentions of curriculum developers and what actually happens in classrooms. Classroom observation thus formed an essential part of the study on the grounds that it is the most appropriate research method for exploring whether an innovation is actually being implemented in a manner consistent with its espoused principles. The purposes of the classroom observation for the study were as follows:

- to identify the extent to which the three teachers were able to carry out TOC principles in their classrooms (cf. point 3 in 4.5.1)
- to describe and interpret the process of carrying out TOC on a longitudinal basis during a school year (cf. point 1 in 4.5.1)
- to triangulate with findings from interviews (see 4.6) and the attitude scale (see 4.7).

Three classroom observation cycles (see table 4.2 overleaf) were carried out during the 1996-1997 academic year. There was usually a gap of about 6-8 weeks between cycles. For each cycle a sequence of 5-6 consecutive English lessons for each teacher were observed and audio-taped. A total of 17 lessons were observed in this way for each teacher. The corpus of 51 observed lessons were all tape-recorded and coded using the protocol described in 4.5.4 below and attached in Appendix 2.

Table 4.2 Schedule for classroom observation

Date	Observation stage
September - November 1996	Piloting of instrument. Identification of informants
December 1996 - February 1997	Observation cycle 1
March - April 1997	Observation cycle 2
May - June 1997	Observation cycle 3

As argued in 4.5.2 a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods were used. A classroom observation instrument using a coding system was prepared to collect mainly quantitative data about the lessons. The rationale for using a coding system was to provide numerical data (see samples in Appendix 4) that could be compared across teachers and across cycles of observation. It was hoped this would reveal patterns and regularities in the lessons and would provide quantitative data for comparison with the qualitative data.

The proliferation of different observation instruments has been criticised in the literature e.g. Allwright & Bailey (1991). Although it was necessary to have some original elements for the classroom observation schedule for this study, it was decided to follow Croll's (1986) recommendation and incorporate some aspects from a previous well-established schedule as a form of cross-validation. In this case, some of the categories from the COLT schedule (see 4.5.2) were used or adapted e.g. participant organisation, student modality. The main foci of the categories are explained below:

- the activity (what teachers and pupils are involved in doing)

- participant organisation (what patterns of interaction between teacher and pupils exist in the class)
- student modality (the language skills that the pupils are involved in and whether there is integration of skills)
- medium (what materials are being used for the lesson)
- teacher language (whether the teacher is using the target language, the mother tongue or mixed code)
- language focus (whether the focus is on form, function or meaning).

These categories are all low inference ones, in other words categories which can be defined in reasonably clear-cut behavioural terms so as to permit a high level of objectivity. The categories were designed to facilitate a description of the lessons observed and contribute to the identification of a preliminary picture of the extent of TOC implementation. For example, a lesson which involved direct teaching from the teacher to the whole class with pupils listening and using the textbook would tend to indicate a traditional teacher-centred non-TOC lesson. More specific information on the extent of TOC implementation was identified through two additional high inference categories. These were the identification of TOC features (category G) and an overall appraisal of 'TOCness' (category H), both requiring analytic judgements based on stated criteria (see 4.5.4.2). The interpretation of these criteria required a certain amount of potentially subjective judgement (cf. 4.3.10), including my accumulated experience as an observer and trainer.

4.5.4 Piloting and development

The piloting of a preliminary observation schedule commenced in January and February 1996 and initial observational data was collected from five lessons with different teachers in different schools. The observation schedule was developed further in July 1996 after intensive discussions with my doctoral supervisor. Piloting was subsequently continued in nine different classrooms in conjunction with the identification of suitable informants who might be interested in taking part in the study (see also 4.3.7). The main issues in the piloting and development of the observation instrument are discussed below.

4.5.4.1 Unit of analysis

The chosen unit of analysis was one of four minute intervals. The advantage of this unit of time was that it permitted the collection of quantitative data at the set intervals but also allowed collection of qualitative field notes (see 4.5.4.4) in the interim periods between the time intervals. The drawback of this unit of analysis is that time boundaries may not correspond with segments of classroom events and there would be a danger that something relevant might occur outside the boundary. The main alternative to the time unit would be a unit of lesson segments or episodes. This was rejected, however, during piloting because the identification of boundaries between segments or episodes was often problematic and necessitated a number of difficult and potentially distracting immediate decisions. It was believed that the disadvantage of the time unit would be minimised by the qualitative field notes obtained outside the four minute intervals. The main advantages of this time unit are: firstly, it allows classroom observation findings to be presented in a uniform way, facilitating comparison across cycles of observation and across cases; and secondly, intra-observer reliability is enhanced by the relatively

consistent and routine observation operation of completing the instrument every four minutes and collecting qualitative field notes during the interim period.

One aspect of the piloting of the classroom observation schedule involved trialing with different uses of time. Initially, five minute time-units were envisaged, in other words providing seven data points for a thirty-five minute lesson. During piloting, however, due to the previous lesson overrunning or the teacher being delayed a few minutes, no lessons lasted for the full thirty-five minutes and some were of less than thirty minutes duration, producing only five data points or a more limited data set. Conversely, in the pilot observations I also tried out three minute time-units. This had the disadvantage of reducing the time available to collecting qualitative field notes between data points. Four minutes was therefore chosen as the most suitable time-unit, usually providing seven or eight data points for a thirty-five minute lesson.

4.5.4.2 TOC features

Given that a major research focus was on the extent of implementation or non-implementation of TOC, a core element of the classroom observation schedule was TOC features (category G of the instrument, see classroom observation protocol in Appendix 2). The identification of TOC features for the observation schedule was carried out through the following steps. Firstly, a thorough review of the TOC framework documentation (Clark *et al.*, 1994) enabled a provisional list of TOC features to be identified. Secondly, two colleagues with experience of both TOC teacher education and the Hong Kong primary school context were asked to suggest a number of features that

might provide evidence of the implementation of TOC principles. I simultaneously developed my own list and in a meeting the three of us developed a composite list for pilot purposes. Thirdly, this list of TOC features was further refined during the piloting process. In particular, targets were deleted from the list because although central to TOC, the extent to which teachers have used the targets is not observable during lessons (3.6.7). The five fundamental ways of learning (3.6.6) were added to the list of features due to the realisation that this was perceived as a key feature by teachers and teacher educators. Fourthly, the provisional list of features was cross-validated through focused discussion in a meeting with John Clark, project leader for the TOC framework. During the piloting of the observation schedule, it was also observed that the identification of TOC features on a simple identifiable/non-identifiable basis was too crude. It was seen as necessary to use some kind of continuum. The live version of the observation schedule, thus identified the features as high, medium or low using descriptors (see Appendix 2) in a parallel way to the adaptation of the framework for task-based learning discussed in 3.6.3.

By conflating the data from category G, a final category of the schedule (category H) was designed to produce an overall judgement as to the extent of TOC implementation in each of the 51 observed lessons. Criteria as shown in Appendix 2 were used to form a judgement as to whether a lesson had shown, 'no evidence', 'limited evidence', 'clear evidence', or 'widespread evidence' of TOC principles. It is acknowledged that such judgements involve a degree of subjective 'high inference' analytical decision-making (see also 4.5.3).

4.5.4.3 Activity

Category A of the classroom observation schedule required the identification of activities or lesson events observable at the four minute time intervals. The specific activities listed in the protocol were initially developed from my own prior experience and feedback from two primary school teachers and one teacher educator. The main issue in this category during the development and piloting phase concerned category A1 (see Appendix 2), the question of how to label the phenomenon where the teacher is ‘teaching’, in other words addressing the whole class for instructional purposes. After extensive piloting it was decided to use a broad classification of ‘teacher presentation’ but to sub-divide it into a) direct teaching and b) pre-activity teacher instructions or demonstration (see Appendix 2). This sub-division aimed to provide information of potential relevance to pre-task stages of task-based learning, one of the key classroom elements of TOC as identified in 3.6.

4.5.4.4 Qualitative classroom data

Qualitative field notes were collected to enable the recording of events which occurred outside the four minute time-unit. These notes reduced the likelihood of failure to detect relevant TOC features occurring outside the four minute time-unit. Hand-written observations were collected during the lesson and entered into a hardback note book immediately after or almost immediately after the lesson with the use of the audio-recordings, which were made for all 51 lessons, with no major recording difficulties occurring. Three types of field notes were gathered: descriptive ones, (entered in black) summarising what took place in the lesson; evaluative ones, (written in blue) commenting

on the nature and quality of teacher and pupil performance in the lesson; and TOC-related ones, (entered in red) analysing features relevant to TOC principles or their implementation. The field notes were used to inform the data description and analysis of classroom data (see 4.8), for example, to provide additional data for a transcribed lesson as per 4.5.4.5 below.

4.5.4.5 Lesson transcriptions

It was neither necessary for the purposes of the study nor logistically feasible to transcribe the entire corpus of 51 lessons which were observed. Instead a sample of lessons was transcribed in accordance with Strauss & Corbin's (1990) suggestion that transcription should be selective. Lessons were chosen in which category H of the observation schedule denoted a high degree of TOC implementation, so as to illuminate RQs 3 and 4. Two full lessons from each of the three teachers were selected for transcription in this way. Such lessons provided data for the discussion of the extent of classroom implementation in chapter 6 and, of the key classroom features of TOC, task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences in chapter 7. Additionally, I selected on the basis of the classroom observation schedule and my field notes a further number of shorter extracts for transcription to illustrate episodes which appeared relevant to the focused analysis of the three classrooms in 6.2.

4.5.4.6 Lesson report forms

An additional source of qualitative data was the completion of lesson report forms. The purpose of the lesson report forms was for informants to provide some written

information on the specific lessons which had just been taught. This would triangulate with the verbal perceptions of the teachers in the interviews and the data from the classroom observation instrument. Given the limited time available to the teachers and so as not to place too heavy a burden on them, the lesson report form was brief and contained the following prompts:

1. What parts of the lesson were you satisfied with?
2. What parts of the lesson were you not so satisfied with?
3. What (if any) TOC elements or principles did you try to put into practice in this lesson? Elaborate (if you can).
4. Any other comments on the lesson

The information gathered from these lesson report forms were mainly used for triangulation with interviews or classroom transcripts.

4.5.5 Validity and reliability of the observation schedule

The validity of an observation instrument reflects the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Construct validity is the extent to which the instrument can be shown to measure the construct, or theoretical construction, which it purports to measure (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). In this case, the construct of ‘TOCness’ was established and cross-validated through the procedures discussed in 4.5.4.2. The low inference features for the classroom observation instrument were derived from the COLT scheme, a well-respected validated observation scheme (see 4.5.2 above). Given that COLT investigates the communicative orientation of classrooms, and that TOC for the subject of English is an approach that shares much with communicative approaches (see 3.8), using a number of COLT categories enhances the construct validity of the

instrument. In addition to construct validity, Chaudron (1988) indicates the importance of criterion validity, which is determined by making comparisons with events or behaviours that are related to or predicted by those on the instrument. This was done by triangulating the findings of the observation instrument with the opinions of the teachers themselves during the post-observation interviews. For example, a finding from the observation instrument which indicated the presence or absence of tasks during a sequence of lessons could be validated to some extent through the post-observation interviews. The teacher response to the questions about tasks might provide some confirmation or disconfirmation of the observational data (although discrepancies might also indicate different perceptions of the term task). In this way, the classroom observation findings are to some extent verified or modified by the interview comments of the informants. The longitudinal aspects of the study also enhance the validity of the study. The repeated observation of five to six consecutive lessons in a cycle and the three cycles of observation during the academic year increase the likelihood that the lessons observed reflect the reality of the classrooms under investigation. Given that there was only one observer for the study, the issue of inter-rater reliability does not apply. With respect to intra-rater reliability, there was a danger that the observer might code differently during different cycles of observation. In order to minimise this possibility, the observation protocol was taken on all observation visits and used for clarification whenever needed. Additionally, the researcher revisited the data at regular intervals both for the purposes of ongoing data analysis and also to check that consistency was being maintained in coding. In the event of discrepancies in coding, checks were made via the field notes and the tape-recording of lessons.

4.5.6 Classroom observation data reduction

As is evident from the above discussion, the classroom data for the study is very extensive. In summary, 51 completed observation schedules, 6 full lesson transcripts, detailed qualitative field notes and summary lesson descriptions (4.8) for all of the 51 lessons were available. For the purposes of analysis which would most illuminate the research questions for the study, it was necessary to focus on specific relevant issues from this array of observational data. From the classroom observation schedule, the main focus was firstly, on category G2 and G3, task-based learning (7.2) and catering for individual learner differences (7.4) as these were the two key classroom features of TOC as identified in 3.6.7. The second primary focus was on category H which identified the overall extent of TOC implementation as discussed in 6.3 and thus was used to focus on RQ3. Category A (activity) and category B (participant organisation) provided subsidiary data which was used to triangulate with categories G, H and the interview data. These data are appended in Appendix 4. Categories C-F were not quantified or analysed in any detail as during the process of data analysis, they were not found to generate significant contributions to the research questions for the study. The qualitative field notes were mainly used to support the analysis of classroom implementation and the lesson transcripts in chapters 6 and 7.

4.6 Interviews

4.6.1 Purposes

Interviewing allows for greater depth than some other research methods, such as questionnaires as it affords interviewers the opportunity to probe into the responses of the

interviewees (Gall *et al.*, 1996). The interviews for this study were semi-structured; within a basic overall framework there was flexibility for some re-ordering of questions and probing of responses, as appropriate. According to Cohen & Manion (1994), the interview as a research technique fulfills three main purposes. Firstly, it collects information bearing on the research questions through providing access to a respondent's knowledge, values and attitudes or beliefs. Secondly, it explores variables and relationships or to test hypotheses. Thirdly, interviews may be used in conjunction with other methods so as to probe the motivations of respondents and to permit triangulation with other data. All three of these purposes pertain to the interviewing carried out for this study. Patton (1987) further suggests that a fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express a personal understanding in their own terms. In this study, interviews permitted the teachers to give their opinions about a number of TOC-related issues (see sample interview schedule in Appendix 6).

4.6.2 *Rapport*

Establishing rapport with informants is an important goal of the interviewing process (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). As indicated in 4.3.7, the fact that there was some prior professional contact between myself and the teacher informants was helpful in creating conditions for the respondents to air their views openly. In terms of possible power-relationships, the researcher was a Western male teacher educator, native-speaker of English, whilst the respondents were Chinese female non-native speaker primary school English teachers. In some cases, this might represent a threatening situation for the

respondents. For this study, there were a number of factors which reduced this threat. The willingness of the case study teachers to be involved in the study (see 4.2.8) indicated some degree of tolerance or positive orientation towards me and a willingness to be observed in the classroom and to be interviewed. They were aware of the procedures to be followed and knew the purposes of the interviews and that I was interested in their opinions and insights. Additionally, the research took place on the 'home ground' of the respondents in a Chinese environment, the schools in which they worked. Although the interviews were carried out in the respondents' second language, the teachers seemed to be sufficiently fluent and confident in the language for this not to be an insuperable problem, although it is acknowledged that when speaking in a second or foreign language, there may be some restriction in one's ability to express some nuances of meaning.

4.6.3 Piloting

Pilot interviews were conducted with two different in-service teachers, who had recently started implementing TOC and had similar backgrounds to those of the case study teachers. The relationships between the pilot interviewees and myself were similar to that of the case study teachers, i.e. I was known to them through my position as a teacher educator. The piloting provided me with experience of carrying out interviews on TOC and gave a preliminary impression of how teachers would react to discussing TOC in a formal semi-structured interview setting. The main outcomes from the pilot interviews were to refine the wording of questions, develop a feeling for which questions are difficult to answer, assist in the development of logical sequencing of the questions and

provide indication of relevant areas that might have been omitted from the provisional interview protocols.

A brief summary of some of the modifications derived from the pilot interviews is indicated below:

- The question, ‘What are your qualifications?’ came over as somewhat blunt and was amended to, ‘Can you tell me what your qualifications are?’
- The question, ‘What learning activities do your pupils do?’ can be interpreted as either what do pupils do in lessons or what tasks do they do. As the former was intended the question was amended to, ‘What do pupils spend most time doing during your TOC lessons?’
- The question, ‘How do you think TOC principles can be put into operation in the language classroom?’ was made more direct and explicit by amending it to ‘In what ways do you think TOC principles can be carried out in the primary English classroom?’ Sequencing the question immediately after the question, ‘According to your understanding, what are the main principles of TOC?’ enables the respondents to talk about the principles of TOC and then the classroom realisation.
- The question ‘What do you like most and least about TOC?’ was made into two separate questions so as to narrow the focus and ensure a response to both parts of the question.

From the process of carrying out the pilot interviews I also became aware of a number of additional topics for discussion that needed to be added to the interview protocol, and discussed with informants, namely:

- AA (see 3.4.3)
- the role and influence of the principal and TOC co-ordinator with respect to TOC implementation in the school
- the reason for the timing of the introduction of TOC in the school
- how the school is carrying out TOC assessment
- the five fundamental ways of learning and their classroom applications.

These insights from the piloting of the interview schedule informed the live interviewing for the study.

4.6.4 Procedures

A series of six interviews (see table 4.3 for when the interviews took place) were conducted with each of the three respondents in order to elicit relevant opinions on TOC. Interviews were recorded with a walkman placed on the desk near the speakers. No major technical problems with equipment or sound quality occurred, except for on one occasion with case study B when a walkman malfunction prevented commencement of the interview, which was then aborted and carried out a later time. For case studies A and C, the six interviews were conducted in the school after classes or during non-contact time. An empty classroom or meeting room was used and very few interruptions were experienced. For case study B, at the teacher's suggestion, some of the interviews were conducted at the HKIED, where she was attending evening classes. The timing and location of the interviews was mainly at the convenience of the respondents. There was sometimes relatively limited time available for carrying out extended interviewing, so I was conscious of the fact that I should not put too much burden of workload and time on

the respondents. The duration of the interviews was approximately as follows: forty-five minutes for the baseline interview, thirty minutes for the post-observation interviews and forty minutes for the summative and post-analysis interviews. These time limitations meant that although a certain amount of probing was carried out, it was not always possible to probe as deeply into certain issues as might have been desirable in an ideal world. Probes are used to deepen the response to a question, to increase the richness of the data being obtained and to give cues to the interviewee about the level of response that is desired (Patton, 1987). The types of probes were mainly of the following three types, derived from Patton (1990). Firstly, hypothetical question which providing a scenario and asking respondents to suggest attitudes or behaviours. Secondly, nudging probes - using non-verbal behaviour such as nodding or silence to encourage elaboration or additional verbal probes including, 'Can you say a bit more?' 'Anything else?' 'Can you give an example?' or 'What do you mean by ..?'. And thirdly, summary questions - summarising what I thought had been said so as to try to ensure the accuracy of my interpretation.

Table 4.3 Chronology of interviews

Type of interview	Date
Baseline	November-December 1996
Post-observation 1	December 1996-February 1997
Post-observation 2	March-April 1997
Post-observation 3	May-June 1997
Summative	June-July 1997
Post-analysis	Summer 1999

4.6.5 *Content*

The first interview, the baseline interview was designed to collect background information about the school, the teacher, her attitude towards ELT, her understanding of TOC and her attitudes towards TOC. The main content of the baseline interview was as follows:

- the school (its background, pupil intake, parental background)
- the school organisation (the principal, the TOC co-ordinator)
- the teacher (experience, qualifications, TOC training)
- the teacher's orientation towards ELT
- the teacher's understanding of and orientation towards TOC.

A post-observation interview was carried out at the end of each of the three cycles of observation. The main purposes of these interviews were to explore the teacher perspective on the lessons that had been taught and to permit triangulation between the teacher view and that indicated by the observation instrument and qualitative field notes. In addition, the teachers might be able to explicate issues that were not clear to the researcher, for example, previous incidents or specific class background knowledge. In addition, the interviews focused on various TOC-related issues so as to elicit teacher opinions on various aspects over TOC on a longitudinal basis. The main content (see Appendix 6 for an example) of the post-lesson observations were as follows:

- areas of teacher satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the lessons observed
- teacher perceptions of the pupils' response to the lessons
- comparisons between this TOC class and similar non-TOC classes taught in previous years

- differences in teacher/pupil behaviour in presence of researcher (observer paradox)
- specific TOC aspects in the lessons observed e.g. tasks, catering for individual differences
- attitudes towards TOC
- areas for continuing teacher development.

A summative interview was carried out between one and two weeks after the third post-observation interview. The purpose of the summative interviews was to elicit teacher opinion on some of the main issues emerging from the data collection and to gauge their reaction to some emerging propositions. There were a number of general questions that were common to the three informants, for example, questions about understanding and attitudes towards TOC. There also tended to be a more individual line of questioning in accordance with the specific events occurring during the course of observation of each teacher. A post-analysis interview was carried out two years later once the data description and analysis had been almost completed. This permitted member checking, the testing of suppositions, clarification of ambiguities and the revisiting of issues that had not been covered in sufficient depth in previous interviews.

4.6.6 Transcriptions

Interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher as soon as possible after the completion of the interviews. Extracts from the interviews are used throughout chapters 5-7 to allow the teachers voice to be heard. For these extracts, the original words of the informants were retained but very minor stylistic modifications were occasionally made to eliminate some repetition and minor grammatical slips. Care was taken with any of these minor modifications not to alter the original sense of what was being said. Square

brackets (e.g. in 5.4.3) are used occasionally to indicate what was being referred to or to clarify something which appeared to be implied but was not actually stated.

4.7 Attitude Scale

4.7.1 Rationale for study of attitudes

Attitudes were defined in 2.8.3 and identified as a factor in the degree of implementation of curriculum innovations. An understanding of these attitudes illuminates teachers' responses to an innovation. When investigating innovation, it is particularly relevant to identify whether classroom behaviour is compatible with expressed attitudes because as noted in 2.8.3 it is not uncommon for teachers to express positive attitudes towards an innovation but not carry it out in the classroom. In this study data on attitudes is triangulated with data from direct classroom observation. Although an attitude scale is a relatively crude instrument, it was felt that quantitative information over two periods of time would complement the other research strategies of classroom observation and semi-structured interviews.

4.7.2 Purposes

This thesis investigates both attitudes and behaviour in the classroom so as to explore the relationship between teacher attitudes and classroom implementation. The attitudes of the three case study teachers were sampled at the beginning and end of the period of classroom observation in order to elicit teacher attitudes towards a number of key components in English Language teaching and learning, and towards TOC. The purposes of the attitude scale were as follows:

- to measure teacher attitudes towards TOC and related constructs

- to identify stated attitudes at two periods of time and so permit identification of any attitude change
- to permit triangulation between teachers' expressed attitudes in interviews, their classroom behaviour and their attitude scale responses
- to compare the attitude scale responses of the case study teachers with those of a wider sample of the target population.

4.7.3 Procedures in development of attitude scale

The following procedures were used in developing the attitude scale. Firstly, an initial series of possible attitude statements were drafted and developed with reference to the TOC literature, principally the TOC framework (Clark *et al.*, 1994). Comparison was also made with other attitude scales, for example, a scale developed to measure attitudes towards a communicative innovation in Greece (Karavas, 1993; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; 2.7.1). The statements either in positive or negative form, were designed to cover various aspects of the attitude under discussion, namely the respondent's orientation to the TOC innovation; the constructivist theories of learning underpinning the TOC framework; ELT communicative methodologies related to task-based learning; teacher and learner roles in the classroom; and the role of grammar, error correction and the textbook/syllabus. Efforts were made to ensure as far as possible that the items were short, clear, unambiguous and readily understandable to teachers. Statements that used technical jargon were avoided as far as possible and statements were intended to fall within the frame of reference of Hong Kong primary school teachers. The provisional version was discussed with an experienced colleague and amendments were made to the wordings of

items and also to presentation of the scale to make it more user-friendly to respondents. A Likert scale was used with columns headed, 'Strongly Disagree', 'Disagree', 'Uncertain', 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree.' A total score for each respondent is computed by giving a score of five for strongly agreeing with a positive statement about the attitude under consideration down to a score of one for strongly disagreeing with a positive statement about the attitude. Similarly, a score of five would be given to strongly disagreeing with a negative statement down to a score of one for strongly agreeing with a negative statement. In this way, a total score can be computed to indicate the overall strength of attitudes of respondents towards principles commensurate with the TOC initiative. The higher the overall score, the more positive is the overall orientation of the respondent as measured by the scale. A Likert scale was used in view of its relative practicality to construct and its high face validity for respondents (Oppenheim 1992). In addition, item analysis (see 4.7.4) tends to facilitate the identification of weak items (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The weaknesses of Likert scales are that the same overall score can be reproduced in different ways; sometimes respondents seem to be wary of strongly disagreeing with items; it is a difficult issue whether to include a midpoint and whether it should be classed as 'neutral', 'undecided' or 'uncertain'. For this attitude scale, the midpoint 'uncertain' was used following Oppenheim (1992).

The provisional rating scale comprising fifty items was piloted with a sample of seventy three members of the target population, practising primary school teachers involved in an in-service course at the HKIEd. The purpose of this piloting was to determine which items were most representative in measuring teachers' attitudes towards TOC and related

principles. This was done by correlating each respondent's score on a particular item with her total score (see reliability, 4.7.4). In the light of the findings from the piloting, the attitude scale was revised and reduced to twenty six items, thirteen indicating a broadly positive orientation towards TOC or TOC-related attitudes and thirteen indicating a broadly negative orientation. As far as possible the items were phrased in contrastive pairs at least one positive statement towards TOC and one negative statement (traditional teaching orientation) for each area. The items are set out in table 4.4 below in terms of topic area and, contrastively, with respect to TOC orientation or traditional orientation. The full scale and the results are in Appendix 7.

Table 4.4 Focus of attitude scale statements

Area	TOC orientation	Traditional orientation
TOC	12, 18, 20	6, 16, 22
Teacher role	7, 14	2, 4
Textbook/individual differences	10, 24	19, 26
Creating sentences/dictation	13	1
Error correction	3	21
Pupil involvement	9	15
Pair/group work	5	25
Grammar	11	8
Rules/tasks	17	23

The attitude scale was administered twice to the case study teachers, once at the time of the collection of baseline data and once about seven months later at the end of the final

classroom observation period. This attitude scale was also administered to a wider sample of the target population, in order to gauge the attitudes towards TOC of the more general population of English teachers and to compare their responses with those of the three case study teachers (see 5.3).

4.7.4 Reliability

An item analysis was carried out in order to determine the internal consistency of the scale. This was computed by correlating each pilot respondent's score on a particular item with her total score (less that particular item). Correlation coefficients were calculated using SPSS. A hypothesis that there would be no correlation between a single item and the overall score could be rejected when the p-value was lower than 0.05, in other words that there was less than 0.05 possibility of the result occurring by chance alone. These data were used to inform the choice of the items for the live attitude scale. Items with a p-value of less than .05 were candidates for the live version of the scale. One item that the statistical analysis indicated to be internally consistent was rejected, however, because all seventy-three respondents agreed or strongly agreed with it so it was unable to capture variation in attitudes. Overall, it was possible to use reliable items in the live version with a p-value of less than 0.05 without compromising the validity of the scale (see below).

4.7.5 Validity

Oppenheim (1992) indicates that demonstrating the validity of an attitude scale is difficult because of the abstract and indirect nature of the scale. In this case, the validity

of the attitude scale is primarily based on informed judgement. The content validity of the scale depends on the extent to which the scale covers the attitude in a balanced way. In this case, the extent to which the attitude scale measures the orientation to the principles of TOC was established by the following means:

- Reference to the theory and practice of TOC, as evidenced in the TOC literature, particularly Clark *et al.*, (1994)
- Experience as a TOC teacher educator from July 1993-November 1996, including teacher education lesson observations, pilot lesson observations for this study and TOC related discussions with teachers
- Discussions with colleagues of the relevance of the scale to the attitude towards the principles of TOC.

The concurrent validity of the scale depends on the extent to which the results are comparable with other relevant criteria. In this case, the results of the attitude scale can be compared with and validated against teachers' classroom behaviours and more extended opinions expressed in interviews. The degree of congruence between the data from classroom observations or interviews and the attitude scale contributes to the scale's validity.

4.8 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves the process of systematically examining, describing, summarising, analysing, synthesising or otherwise recombining the evidence so as to address the research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This is an iterative process which takes place both during and after the collection of data. For the study, preliminary data analysis was conducted during the collection of the data through the development of

intuitions, ideas and general lines of questioning. These intuitions were an initial preliminary part of the ongoing data analysis and informed the subsequent data collection e.g. later interviews. As the data collection was nearing completion, data analysis for the study continued via three concurrent flows of analysis, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification, derived from Miles & Huberman (*ibid*). Data reduction refers to the process of describing, selecting, simplifying, coding, categorising, summarising and transforming the data from the lesson observations and interviews. Data display is an organised, compressed assembly of information, through summaries, tables or other diagrammatic means. These summaries or visual representations serve to make sense of the data, facilitate analytic induction and the provisional drawing of conclusions. The third stream of analysis is conclusion drawing / verification, whereby hypotheses and conclusions are drawn and then tested and re-tested against the data and verified or disproved (Miles & Huberman, *ibid*). Within this framework, the general approach to data analysis for the study was inductive analysis which implies that patterns, themes and categories of analysis emerge from the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis (Patton, 1990). Induction refers to the way in which the researcher looks for relationships within and between cases, identifying patterns, themes, consistencies and exceptions to the rule (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Although the process is inductive, it is a creative and intellectual process informed and stimulated by a host of other factors and happenings, including relevant prior experiences, knowledge of the literature, discussions with teachers and colleagues.

More specifically, data analysis for the study involved the following stages. Firstly, for

each of the 51 observed lessons, the classroom data were summarised as in sample 4.1 below. Each summary involved a brief description of the activities in the lesson, the data on the degree of 'TOCness' shown in the lesson, some comments on teaching methods and a section on issues or propositions emerging from the observation of the lesson. This provided an aide-memoire that could be cross-referenced to the primary data of the classroom observation schedule and the field notes.

Abbreviations used in sample 4.1

T = The teacher

Ps = Pupils

COMM = Communication

IND DIFFS = Catering for individual learner differences

ACTIVE PPTION = Active pupil participation

Sample 4.1 Summary lesson description

Teacher C Lesson 1.2-1.3 (i.e. a double lesson forming the second and third lessons of the first cycle of observation) *Date:* 20/2/1997 *Time 1.00-2.10*

Language focus: Family vocabulary

Activities: Reading from wordcards, 'my brother, my sister.'

Language game - Ps given wordcards denoting family members e.g. grandfather. Ps have to stand up when their wordcard is called by T, otherwise they are out. Once a few pupils are out, she gets them to take over the role of the T and to say names of the family members (promising technique to involve 'out' pupils). Ps as readers speak less clearly and confidently and T becomes

GAME

more strict in 'outing' Ps. One girl shouts, "You're out!" to draw attention to a classmate who stood up out of turn, an example of using English for real communication. Individual written exercise correcting orthographic errors (exhibit C1.2a) and joining dots to make sentences (exhibit C1.2b) - not clear whether all the Ps had to do this or only the brighter ones (no announcement made to whole class). Colouring in exhibit C1.2a, while they are doing this T goes round and conducts 2-3 minute individual tutoring with several pupils.

COMM

IND DIFFS

TOCness: Some evidence of TOC principles. Active participation in language game - identified as TOC feature by T, "Communicating with classmates. Ps had a chance to read out a word and the classmates responded to it. Ps-Ps interaction." Some catering for individual differences in terms of individualised tuition and different speeds of work and amount of support.

ACTIVE
PTION

IND DIFFS

Teaching methods: Skilfully organised, enjoyable game involving meaningful and useful practice for Ps.

GAME

Issues/propositions emerging from my reflections: Strategy for catering for individual learner differences - T gives Ps something relatively routine to do e.g. colouring and then goes around and gives individual instruction to selected Ps.

IND DIFFS

Codes are labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information collected during the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For the study, codes were short forms, placed in the margins of the piece of data as in samples 4.1 above and 4.2 below. Data identified by the same or similar codes can be collected together so as to

provide a multi-faceted picture of the topic under discussion. This third stage categorising, is defined as the process of grouping concepts that seem to pertain to the same phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). At all stages, data from different sources were triangulated (see 4.2.3) in order to strengthen the internal validity of the study. As a concrete example of this process, I would like to take the phenomenon of task-based learning. Codes related to this phenomenon included 'Time' and 'Syllabus' as in sample 4.2. Other codes within this category were 'resources', 'preparation' and 'topic'. From these codes, the category of factors impacting on the development of task-based learning emerged. (The discussion arising from this aspect of the data can be seen in 8.6).

Sample 4.2 Coding of interview extract

Teacher A, (summative interview, p. 4)

R: What benefits has the introduction of TOC brought to the school?

T: One benefit is the change of curriculum forced publishers to produce better books, better textbook. Another is that pupils enjoy more when they are learning English. But the school itself is still looking at its advantages or drawbacks. Some people in this school may think that there are drawbacks more than advantages.

IMPACT;
TEXTBOOKS;
PUPIL
ENJOYMENT;

R: That was going to be my next question, what problems or drawbacks has TOC brought to the school?

T: Some of my colleagues, their style is to follow the syllabus, to follow the schedule, not to follow to chase the schedule and

CHASING
SYLLABUS;

they worry that pupils learn less than the pupils before, the amount of language. Some of them may worry that their standard may fall. And there is a limitation that is universal, that is time, every school everyone knows that time is a big limitation, almost every year, year after year when we talk to our colleagues inside our school, outside our school, we always say that there is not often time to finish that, so under time limitation there are only 6 years of school. My principal thinks that it is not worthwhile to spend so much time on letting pupils enjoying themselves, it is not worthwhile to speak to listen so much but more time should be spent on reading, writing and most important of all, train their familiarity about grammar.

PUPIL
STANDARDS;

TIME
LIMITATION

PUPIL
ENJOYMENT –
COMPETING
OBJECTIVES;
GRAMMAR

The possibility of using computer-based analysis, such as NUD.IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data, Indexing Searching and Theorising) e.g. Richards & Richards, (1994) as an analytic tool was rejected because I believed that a ‘hands-on’ method would enable me to immerse myself more fully in the data and so increase the validity of the findings. Maykut & Morehouse (1994) state, “we have found the more hands-on approach helpful for learning to do data analysis and for being able to visually pore over a large amount of data simultaneously” (p. 148). Similarly, Seidel (1991) points out a disadvantage of using computers as a principal tool in data analysis in that it can have the negative effect of distancing the researcher from the data. As, Hitchcock & Hughes (1995) observe, “a computer can never act as a substitute for the researcher’s own insights” (p. 301).

4.9 Summary of chapter

This chapter has justified the case study approach taken in this thesis. It places the study primarily within the qualitative research paradigm, although also making some use of quantitative data. It describes the research strategy used for the study, a multiple case study design focusing on three teacher informants in different primary school settings. It discusses the three main data collection methods used for the study, namely classroom observation, semi-structured interviews and an attitude scale. It concludes by describing and exemplifying how data analysis for the study was carried out⁴.

CHAPTER 5. TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS, ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

5.1 Scope of chapter

Having discussed the design of the study, I now present the findings in three chapters. Chapter 5 focuses on teacher understandings, attitudes and perceptions. Chapter 6 analyses the general degree of implementation in the classroom. Chapter 7 explores the two major areas of TOC in the classroom, task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences. This chapter mainly addresses the following research questions from (4.4):

RQ1 What are the teachers' attitudes towards TOC, English teaching and learning?

RQ2 To what extent do the teachers understand TOC principles?

RQ6 What are the facilitating and inhibiting factors in the management of change for TOC?

The chapter is divided into sub-sections on the following areas: teachers' understanding of TOC, teachers' general beliefs about teaching and learning languages, their specific attitudes towards TOC, their views on the management of change in TOC and their perspectives on cultural issues relevant to TOC.

5.2 Teachers' understanding of TOC

5.2.1 *Introduction*

In 2.8.7, it was demonstrated that teachers' understanding of an innovation plays a significant role in the extent and ways in which curricula are adopted. Understanding was defined as comprising two elements. Firstly, the ability to articulate the principles of TOC in a way that indicates both knowledge of TOC 'theory' and a personal

interpretation of what TOC means for the teacher. And, secondly, an awareness of the classroom implications of TOC principles. It was also noted that an incomplete understanding of an innovation often leads to a failure to implement it. Here I discuss the extent to which the three teachers in the study demonstrate their understanding of the principles of TOC. Two TOC aspects are particularly highlighted: i) tasks and ii) catering for individual learner differences in line with their primary focus in the classroom implementation of TOC as argued in 3.6.7. Chapter 7 focuses specifically on how the teachers interpreted these features in their classrooms.

The following three sub-sections examine the understanding of TOC displayed by the case study teachers, based particularly on the first four interviews, in which they were asked each time to summarise their understanding of the main principles of TOC. In constructing an understanding of an innovation, teachers will be involved in developing an interface between the new curriculum and their own personal beliefs, which are likely to derive from their own experiences as learners, their teacher training, their teaching experience, their interaction with colleagues/other teachers, the culture of the school they work in and society at large. Understanding may involve interpreting and integrating new schemata and integrating and reconciling them with existing ones, and in some cases there may be 'dissonance' before integration.

5.2.2 Teacher A's understandings

At the time of the study teacher A had eight years experience as an English teacher and had been working in her current school for the past six years. In terms of training, she took English as a major subject at a college of education, (now incorporated within the

HKIEd). She has also completed the sixteen week full-time in-service course offered by the English Department of the HKIEd. She is one of the panel chairs for English with special responsibilities for TOC development. Teacher A was trained according to the communicative approach and has also been carrying out AA in her school. She describes TOC as “a better and more comprehensive carrying out of the Activity Approach”. She believes that she has been teaching in accordance with the principles of these two previous approaches. The interview data indicate that teacher A seems to grasp the main concepts of TOC and build them onto her pre-existing attitudes and beliefs about teaching. A number of extracts are quoted to illustrate her understanding of different aspects of TOC. In the first extract below, she highlights the reporting of information, an aspect of TOC assessment (3.6.5) and the five fundamental ways of learning (3.6.6):

It's [TOC is] a change in the whole curriculum, to let pupils learn in a better way, to let them know more accurately how well they are learning, and to report to the parents more accurately. And the change of curriculum leads to different outcomes from the previous practice, for example, if TOC is implemented successfully pupils should acquire the skills of thinking, problem-solving and in terms of the English subject they should be able to have a better oral ability. (Baseline interview, p.7)

Other extracts see her emphasising constructivist elements of TOC (3.6.1), such as ‘learning by doing’ so that pupils are actively involved in their learning. She describes one of the aims of TOC as “To make learning more like real-life not very class constrained, to let pupils learn happily, creatively to involve them in learning by doing”. In addition to the explicit reference to ‘learning by doing’, this extract alludes to elements of the notion of *context* (real-life situations) found in the TOC task definition (3.6.3). She goes on to describe ‘task’ as follows: “Task is an activity, in the task pupils should have the chance to use the language meaningfully but not just to read after the teachers or repeat something, after the task the pupils should consolidate what they have learnt”.

This description encapsulates quite neatly the notion that pupils should be putting language into use through tasks. In comparison with the TOC definition of task, she does not mention context and purpose directly (cf. 3.6.3) but she has demonstrated her own understanding and interpretation of task-based learning. In other words, she does not ‘parrot’ a textbook definition but tries to elaborate the notion in her own way, ‘task as activity’, ‘using language’, ‘task for consolidation of learning’. By using her own terms and relating the innovation to her own prior beliefs, she seems to be developing some personal understanding of the innovation.

She affirms her belief in the TOC feature of catering for individual learner differences (3.6.4) and states that teachers should strive for differentiation in the classroom. She outlines her views as follows:

It should be the aim of every teacher to cater for individual differences because every pupil, every person is unique and they develop in different ways and they learn differently. ... In every class, there must be some pupils slower than the others so we teachers have to think of the way to help them. Also there must be some pupils brighter than the others so we should prepare something and let them do more, let them learn more. (Baseline interview, p.10)

She does however acknowledge that in practice large class sizes make it difficult to cater for individual differences, an issue which relates to the perceived practicality of TOC (see also 2.8.1; 5.4.5).

As demonstrated in both the interview data and in the classroom data (see 6.2.2) motivation and arousal of pupil interest is valued highly by teacher A, for example:

[The main principles of TOC are] to let pupils involve in their learning and participate actively in their learning so I use some activities to arouse their interest and let them do these things and to establish their ability to solve some problems to establish the capability of reasoning. (Post-observation interview 1, p.4)

Learners learn mostly through using their English, not only memorising or something told by the teacher only. Knowledge must be integrated with other areas then later it can become consolidated. Learner difference is a thing that needs to be looked after. Learner independence is also another point worth carrying out. (Post-observation interview 2, p.3)

Overall, in these extracts teacher A has identified and referred to a number of aspects of TOC: recording of information and reporting to parents; the five fundamental ways of learning; real-life applications of learning; task-based learning; catering for individual learner differences; arousing pupil interest and involving pupils actively in learning; and integration of knowledge and skills. This seems to indicate a sound grasp of the multi-faceted nature of TOC. She is able to identify a number of these features of TOC and express them coherently in her own terms and in relation to classroom learning. This seems indicative of a sound understanding of TOC, within the parameters of the definition of understanding outlined above.

5.2.3 Teacher B's understandings

At the time of the study, teacher B was in her third year of teaching. She holds a BA degree majoring in music from one of the universities in Hong Kong. She did not have a formal teaching qualification but at the time of the research was in the first year of a two year in-service course of initial teacher training at the HKIEd. As she had only recently begun her training, she is relatively unfamiliar with English teaching methodologies, for example, those typically associated with communicative language teaching. Perhaps due to the fact that she had only two years of prior teaching experience and is still in the process of constructing her own conception of teaching, she tends to be somewhat less confident and forthcoming in her interviews than the other two respondents. For example,

in the following excerpt I try to tease out a more detailed and clear answer from her somewhat elliptical comments:

R: According to your understanding what are the main principles of TOC?

T: Targets and tasks

R: Anything else?

T: Also they emphasise the scheme of work and the assessment.

R: In what ways do you think these TOC principles can be carried out in the Primary English classroom?

T: I think we can elaborate the use of the task because it is rather different from the worksheets, we can give much more chance for students to think rather than just writing the words, so it is not like a kind the homework but ... it is also an assessment whether they can think before writing the assessment.

R: You've used this term language learning task, what exactly do you understand by the term task?

T: Task mainly has objectives and it can link the pupil ability of understanding, conceptualising, that kind of communication. (Baseline interview, p.7)

Some of her statements in this extract are somewhat inaccurate or lack clarity (quite understandable in an untrained teacher). For example, scheme of work is not more prominently emphasised in TOC than for other syllabi. Her attempt at defining task is somewhat vague, for example, the reference to objectives does not distinguish task from worksheets, exercises or other activities that all possess their different objectives. She does however, make some relevant points by distinguishing tasks from worksheets and the mention of 'giving more chance for pupils to think' may relate to the five fundamental ways of learning.

The following comment identifies the centrality of catering for individual learner differences in TOC but she perceives that there are implementation constraints within the Hong Kong context, specifically large class sizes:

I think the idea of TOC is to cater for learner differences; this is an ideal way to have different levels of homework worksheets for different learners to cater for learner differences. This is rather difficult in the Hong Kong school situation, because we have too many students in the class. (Post-observation interview 3, p.6).

In the post-analysis interview, she reaffirms her belief in catering for individual learner differences as follows, “I believe education is ... every student should have their own characters and have their own ability and the teachers should be considering each student’s ability and interests. Maybe this is catering for individual differences”. I show, however, in 7.3 that there is actually little direct evidence of catering for individual learner differences in teacher B’s observed lessons.

Teacher B correctly sees TOC as being similar to AA (3.4.3) which she has been carrying out in her school since she began her teaching career. In common with many other Hong Kong primary school teachers, including teachers A and C, she is not however able to distinguish clearly the differences between the two approaches as she puts it, “I can’t figure out the big difference between Activity Approach and TOC because both of them are very similar. TOC is actually a curriculum but using the AA methods so is not so different”. This is understandable given the lack of coherence in curriculum reform discussed in 3.4.4 and 8.3.1. She does, however, make a very relevant comment in the first post-observation interview when she observes that the teaching approach of AA and TOC are similar but that TOC contains additional components, for example, assessment. Overall, her comments indicate a partial understanding of TOC, for example, she is able

to identify key elements of TOC, such as targets, tasks and assessment but is unable to express clearly what they represent. The fact that she is still developing an embryonic understanding of what TOC means is commensurate with her status as a teacher undergoing training.

5.2.4 Teacher C's understandings

Teacher C had four years teaching experience at the commencement of this study, one year in a secondary school and three years at her current school. Like teacher A, she had completed a teaching certificate with English as a major subject from a college of education. She also holds a B.Ed degree from a British university and at the time of the research was studying for an M.Ed at the Open University of Hong Kong. She is the panel chair for the subject of English and also the TOC coordinator in her school. Similar to teacher A, teacher C has been trained in the communicative approach and believes that she has been implementing it. She emphasised different aspects of TOC during the various interviews conducted for the study. The different emphases seem to indicate a general 'feel' for TOC and associated approaches, such as activity and communicative approaches. For example, in the baseline interview she emphasised that TOC should help pupils to enjoy learning and she also stressed the notion of learning life skills, i.e. things that they can use in their future daily or working lives. In the first post-observation interview, she emphasised communication as a fundamental principle of TOC. In the second post-observation interview, she focused on the notion of pupils finding things out for themselves, communication and problem-solving. The quotation

below from the third post-observation interview illustrates elements of her conception of TOC:

I think we should try to motivate them [the pupils], try to increase their interest in learning, not just copying. I think put the knowledge in use is quite important in TOC. I think in TOC it should be more lively, not just a classroom situation, not just learn this but know that it is useful and they can use it and they know that it is useful for the whole life, I think that is TOC. (Post-observation interview 3, p.7).

Although she has not used TOC terminology directly, she has touched on a number of TOC elements, for example, *active involvement of pupils* (first two sentences), *task* ('knowledge in use'), *real-life context* ('not just a classroom situation'). The fact that she discusses TOC concepts in her own words, rather than through repeating training manual jargon seems to indicate a personal understanding and interpretation of the innovation. In this respect, she is similar to teacher A. In another extract from the second post-observation interview, she makes a comment which seems to equate to the TOC principle of pupils actively constructing their own knowledge (3.6.1):

I think the most important is that I have to get them to do something by themselves, to work out something but not I've told them what to do or I tell them the results, they should try to get the results by themselves. (Post-observation interview 2, p.4)

In general, teacher C has demonstrated an ability to identify and discuss a number of key features of TOC. Like teacher A, she seems to have internalised a number of aspects of TOC and has the ability to interpret and articulate them in her own terms.

5.2.5 Comparison of teachers' understandings

All three respondents have noted the similarity between TOC and AA, which they have been adopting prior to the introduction of TOC. Both approaches emphasise 'learning by doing' with pupils carrying out activities or tasks as a regular part of their learning. Two of the teachers (A and C) pointed out the commonalities between TOC and

communicative approaches because their initial teacher training courses put particular emphasis on such methods. Teacher B admits that she is not particularly familiar with communicative approaches. This is partly because the English curriculum for schools is now more focused on TOC rather than communicative approaches that were recommended in the previous syllabus (Curriculum Development Committee, 1981), so that the training courses which she has attended have not focused on communicative approaches in any detail. The teachers made connections between TOC and previous initiatives but it is worth pointing out that the main TOC framework document (Clark *et al.*, 1994) despite being detailed in many respects, makes no reference to either activity or communicative approaches. Explicit reference to connections between different reforms is rarely made by government proponents of change and the tendency for training courses to treat topics or innovations in isolation rather than in relation to each other means the connections between different innovations are largely unexplored (Clark *et al.*, 1999; see also 8.3.1). The fragmented nature of ED units concerned with reform initiatives (3.2.1) exacerbates this lack of coherence (see also 8.3.1).

Teachers A and C can be described as having an understanding of TOC which is commensurate with the ideas propagated by its developers and proponents. They have made a number of interpretations of TOC which seem to reflect its spirit, without necessarily adopting the same terminology used in the documentation. This, in fact, seems to show that they are developing a personal interpretation of the new curriculum and integrating this with their own prior understanding and beliefs. Teacher B is still developing an understanding of TOC, which is wholly natural in an inexperienced

teacher only part way through an initial training course. Table 5.1 below summarises this discussion by outlining the degree of understanding of three teaching approaches central to TOC, namely the activity and communicative approaches (CA) and TOC itself.

Table 5.1 Summary of teachers' understandings

Teacher	Training	AA	CA	TOC
A	Trained	Demonstrates understanding of principles and practice	Demonstrates understanding of principles and practice	Demonstrates understanding of principles and practice
B	Untrained (training in progress)	Demonstrates understanding of principles and practice	Not familiar with this approach	Developing an understanding of principles and practice
C	Trained	Demonstrates understanding of principles and practice	Demonstrates understanding of principles and practice	Demonstrates understanding of principles and practice

5.3 Teachers' attitudes towards TOC

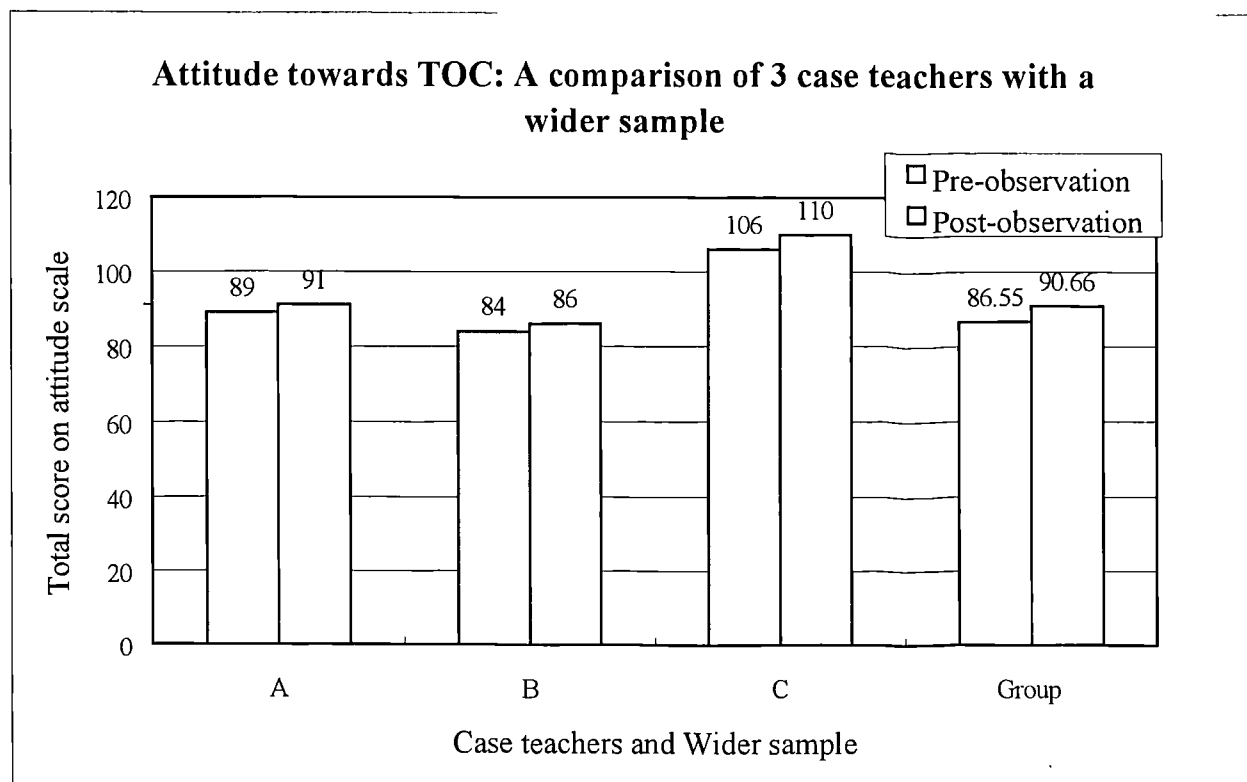
5.3.1 Introduction

This section discusses firstly the general beliefs of the teachers about English teaching and learning as evidenced by their interview responses. The discussion focuses on those beliefs which emerge most strongly from the interview data. This brief overview of attitudes (which is further elaborated with respect to the classroom operationalisation of these attitudes in chapter 6) provides a backdrop for an examination of their specific attitudes towards TOC as indicated by both attitude scale and interview responses.

The development of the attitude scale is detailed in 4.7. It may be recalled that a higher total score represents a more positive overall orientation towards TOC. The results for

the three case study teachers and the mean of the wider sample are shown in table 5.2 below and I refer back to it in 5.3.2-5.3.4.

Table 5.2 Comparison of attitudes of case study teachers and wider sample



In addition to the attitude scale, the first four interviews for the case studies also included specific questions related to the respondents' attitude towards TOC. For example, the three teachers were asked orally to state their attitude towards TOC choosing from the 'scaled responses' (Cohen & Manion, 1994) 'very positive, positive, undecided, negative, very negative.' In the interviews, there were also open-ended discussions of teachers' attitudes towards TOC.

5.3.2 Teacher A's attitudes

I examine teacher A's attitudes through discussing her general beliefs about teaching and learning, and then her more specific attitudes towards TOC.

5.3.2.1 General beliefs about teaching and learning of English

In the baseline interview, teacher A outlines her belief in motivating pupils through doing activities and getting them to put language into use. The following three short excerpts are illustrative of these beliefs: "You [teachers] have to arouse pupils' interest", "I always ask them to do something [not just listen to the teacher]" and "the teacher should give them a chance to use the learnt things orally". Pair- or group-work are regular features of her teaching, she states that such activities are carried out "once or twice a week because for every chapter [of the textbook] we designed that kind of work for them, they enjoyed it". This aspect of pupils' learning through enjoyment is a recurring theme in her interview data, for example, "When I feel that pupils enjoy the lesson and I can see their response, then immediately I feel most satisfied". At times though there is some conflict between enjoyable activities and discipline. As she states in one of the post-observation interviews, "they are quite noisy and especially one or two of them are very disturbing, I have to remind them, repeat and repeat again but still they are quite disturbing".

As her students are generally of above average ability (see 6.2.2), she is able to use English medium for most of the time during English lessons. She believes that it is essential to provide exposure to English because, "if teachers don't use English in the lesson then probably they [the pupils] will not have much opportunity to use English

outside the classroom”. She does mention however, that she may revert to Cantonese occasionally under two particular circumstances, namely when discussing something complicated or for discipline purposes. She also comments in contrast, that several of the naughty boys come from a “half-English speaking family [returning emigrants], so I can use English to scold them”. My perception of this was that some of the worse discipline problems are caused by high English ability pupils possibly because the lesson content seemed too elementary for them. In the post-analysis interview however, she disconfirmed this notion, stating that she felt it was more an issue of pupil personality and upbringing rather than ability.

5.3.2.2 Specific attitudes towards TOC

In terms of the attitude scale, as shown in table 5.2 the tallying of teacher A’s responses reveal a more positive attitude towards TOC than the wider sample of teachers. In the pre-observation response her tallied response was 89 in comparison with a mean of 86.55 for the sample of 69 teachers. She ranked the same as the 27th highest out of 69 teachers. In the post-observation, the tally is 91, two points higher than before in comparison with the group mean of 90.66. In the post-observation, teacher A ranked the same as the 27th highest out of 59 respondents. The ‘effect size’ (Borg & Gall, 1989) was computed and for the three teachers, the change in attitudes was found to be not statistically significant.

With respect to the six statements in the attitude scale, referring explicitly by name to TOC, she gave the same answers on both the pre- and post-administrations of the scale. From these responses it is inferred that she has a consistent orientation in supporting the principles of TOC, believing that she is carrying out the innovation, perceiving that

pupils will be more motivated and learn more using it and that TOC teaching is more effective than traditional teaching. Despite the positive nature of these responses towards TOC, she agreed with the statement, 'TOC is impractical in Hong Kong schools', and I discuss this issue in 5.4.5. In her interview responses, teacher A described her attitude towards TOC as 'positive' in each of the first four interviews in which she was asked to choose from the options 'very positive, positive, undecided, negative, very negative'.

The extracts below indicate her stated reasons for being positive about TOC:

Because I can see that the pupils enjoy it more in the lesson, because I supported the Activity Approach and I think TOC is a better and more comprehensive carrying out of the Activity Approach, so I like it. And I like my colleagues to do tasks with the pupils and let them talk during the lessons. But we do think we have to think about writing tasks and giving pupils more writing tasks. (Baseline interview, p.11)

The last sentence indicates that she has some reservation about the development of pupils writing skills in TOC. This derives from a concern in her school (also reported by teacher C) that under TOC, pupils seem to progress in speaking and listening skills to the possible detriment of their grammatical and written accuracy (see also 5.5). This evidences a tension between more traditional approaches focusing on grammar and accuracy and the development of oracy in the early primary years.

She also points out that TOC is congruent with her own teaching beliefs and style. As shown in 2.8.3, teachers are likely to implement innovations which match their own values and beliefs but are likely to resist changes which are incompatible with their existing beliefs. In the following quotation, she explains aspects of TOC which match her own beliefs: "The spirit of it matches my own style. I myself thought in that way, too, learning English should be enjoyable, keep pupils involved, involved greatly, this is

the main thing I agree very much with TOC". This is an important factor, facilitating the implementation of TOC in her classroom. In other words, if a proposed innovation is congruent with existing teaching approaches, it is more easily implemented (cf. 2.8.1). The interview data indicate that her concerns about the impracticality of TOC pertain principally to concerns about class sizes, workloads and TOC assessment. She consistently mentions one TOC area that she is not positive about, namely the recording of assessment information for reporting to parents. For example, she states in the baseline interview, "[TOC assessment] is the part that our colleagues feared most, so we decided not to do so much assessment as required by the ED booklet". She finds TOC assessment to be a substantial workload burden, leading to a lot of paperwork which does not seem to impact on classroom learning. Similar findings were elicited from teacher respondents to three major TOC research studies (Morris *et al.*, 1996; Clark *et al.*, 1999; Morris *et al.*, 1999). With respect to catering for individual learner differences, she is positive about this notion stating:

It should be the aim of every teacher to cater for individual differences because every pupil, every person is unique and they develop in different ways and they learn differently. ... In every class, there must be some pupils slower than the others so we teachers have to think of the way to help them. Also there must be some pupils brighter than the others so we should prepare something and let them do more, let them learn more. (Baseline interview, p.10)

Overall, the interview data seems to indicate a somewhat more positive response to TOC than that evidenced by tallying the attitude scale responses. It is worth pointing out that in the attitude scale teacher A does not strongly agree or strongly disagree with any statements. It is not clear whether this is because of an unwillingness to use the extremities of the scale or whether she really does not strongly agree/disagree with any of the items. When questioned about this in the post-analysis interview, she explained that

there are many uncertainties in life so she feels it difficult to strongly agree or strongly disagree with something. The overall effect of this tendency is to reduce her score in comparison with other respondents, for whom this phenomenon of avoiding the extremes of the scale was observable but less marked.

5.3.3 Teacher B's attitudes

I examine teacher B's attitudes through discussing her general beliefs about teaching and learning, and then her more specific attitudes towards TOC.

5.3.3.1 General beliefs about teaching and learning of English

Teacher B describes one of her main roles as a teacher as “to give lectures” to the pupils. Within this lecturing mode, she describes her aims as an English teacher are to teach language items, such as vocabulary or grammar to the pupils. In both the pre- and post-versions of the attitude scale, she agreed with the statements ‘the main role of the teacher is to transmit knowledge’, ‘the teacher should be an authority figure in the classroom’, ‘pupils learn most when they are listening to the teacher’ and ‘explaining grammar rules is an important part of my teaching’ (see Appendix 7). From this it can be inferred that she primarily adopts a traditional transmissive stance towards teaching. She also believes firmly in the need for a strong disciplinary foundation in her teaching. In her own words, she states:

The discipline should be settled before the lesson starts, I think that is a rule for teaching ... if the discipline is lost then I think the activity cannot be continued ... When I came to the interview the principal told me this is the first step, ‘get the pupils settled, have the discipline completely under control when you start the lessons; don’t do anything [start the lesson] if the class is in chaos’. (Summative interview, p.2)

In the post-analysis interview, I probed the issue of whether this belief in discipline derived more from herself or from the principal and she responded that it was their shared belief.

She is somewhat hesitant about carrying out activities in her classes for two stated reasons. Firstly, she is concerned about discipline factors as indicated above and further explored in 7.2.2. Secondly, she is concerned about not having enough time to complete the teaching syllabus (see also 7.3.2). Her attitude scale responses on this issue seem not wholly consistent, but do not seem to corroborate this expressed viewpoint. She disagreed with the statement ‘it is important to complete the teaching syllabus’ on the first administration of the attitude scale but agreed with it on the second administration. For the statement ‘it is important to do all the exercises in the textbook’, she disagreed on both versions of the scale.

As shown in 6.2.3 one of the features of teacher B’s teaching is the use of mixed code, switching between English and Chinese. In the first post-observation interview, she describes this method as follows, “I use English once and then I use Chinese”. This issue was revisited in more detail in the summative interview as she explains her rationale for using mixed code:

When I speak to them [the pupils] in Chinese, they know that something is difficult, usually when I talk to them in Chinese, by explaining some instructions, they may feel that there is something very important that the teacher is trying to explain to them. Usually, some tenses I will explain in Chinese and tell them, and emphasise that the following materials are very important then usually they can pay more attention at that moment. (Summative interview, p. 2)

I raised the issue of a potentially negative impact on English language acquisition if

pupils develop the habit of only attending to the Chinese instructions, perceiving that most English will be repeated and she responds as follows:

I am trying not to speak too much in Chinese after I have given the English instructions, but if I found from their facial expression that they are not understanding what I am talking about so I need to explain it in Chinese.
(Summative interview, p. 2)

5.3.3.2 Specific attitudes towards TOC

In both administrations of the scale as evidenced in table 5.2, teacher B showed a less positive overall attitude towards TOC than the wider sample. In the pre-observation, her tallied score was 84 compared to the group average of 86.55. Teacher B was the same as the 20th lowest (46th highest) out of 69 respondents. In the post-observation, she scored 86, two points higher than before, but still lower than the group mean of 90.66. For the post-observation scale, Teacher B was the same as the 14th lowest (43rd highest) out of 59 respondents. As with teacher A the change was not statistically significant. With respect to the six statements in the attitude scale, referring explicitly by name to TOC, she gave similar answers on both the pre- and post-administrations of the scale and was relatively neutral on both administrations of the scale. For example, she replied, ‘uncertain’ on both administrations to the statements, ‘TOC is impractical’, ‘traditional teaching is more effective than TOC teaching’, and ‘under TOC pupils will learn more than before’. She stated her support for the principles of TOC, although her general beliefs about teaching discussed above do not provide much evidence to support this viewpoint. She claimed to be teaching according to TOC principles, although I show in 6.3.2 that implementation of TOC was somewhat limited in her lessons. The one different response in the post-observation scale pertained to pupil motivation; on the pre-scale she was neutral whilst on the post-scale, she indicated pupils would be more motivated. This could be seen as a

tentative indication that her increased experience in carrying out TOC has led to an increased belief in the likelihood of TOC raising levels of motivation, although I did not probe into this issue in the interviews.

In the interviews, teacher B described her attitude towards TOC as ‘positive’ on each of the four occasions, she was asked to choose from the options ‘very positive, positive, undecided, negative, very negative’. Given the discrepancy between this response and her attitude scale responses, it is not clear whether this is really the case or whether she feels unwilling to oppose TOC openly, given that it is Government policy and also that she is aware that I am generally positive about TOC. She gives a variety of opinions as to why she is positive about TOC, including that it is similar to the previous teaching methods in the school, she appreciates the underlying principles of TOC and she thinks the pupils learn more. Attempts to probe the perceived discrepancy between attitude scale and interview responses were sometimes rather counter productive (see also 8.7.3). An example of her apparent reticence in speaking frankly about TOC occurs in the following extract from the post-analysis interview:

R: You mentioned things you believe in. Now maybe there are some things in TOC that you believe in strongly. Maybe there are other things that you don’t believe in ...

T: It doesn’t really matter whether my belief is matching with TOC. I think the most important thing is the students can learn. (Post-analysis interview, p.4)

When pressed further, she admits that “personally, I don’t like the recording part”. Similar to teacher A, she tended to identify assessment, recording and reporting as the main problem area in TOC. She mentions some challenging aspects: she finds that the recording and reporting to parents aspects generate additional paperwork; she finds it

quite challenging to provide contextualisation for assessment tasks; she finds it difficult to judge which assessment tasks relate to which different targets; and wonders if it is a problem if some targets relate to a number of different assessment tasks.

Overall, teacher B can be characterised as somewhat ambivalent towards TOC. Her attitude scale responses show her to be less positive than the wider sample of teachers. In the interview data, teacher B claims that she is positive about TOC but there are contradictions with the attitude scale responses and between some of the interviews. Additionally, as I demonstrate in 6.3.2, her classroom behaviours are not consistently congruent with a positive orientation towards TOC.

5.3.4 Teacher C's attitudes

I examine teacher C's attitudes through discussing her general beliefs about teaching and learning, and then her more specific attitudes towards TOC.

5.3.4.1 General beliefs about teaching and learning of English

Teacher C feels that her general beliefs about teaching and learning stem largely from her pre-service teacher training. She states that she tries very hard to implement the teaching strategies to which she was exposed in the college of education, "I will try to put everything I learnt in college in my classroom". Given that her training focused on the principles and practice of communicative approaches to language teaching, these are the methods that she endeavours to carry out. She also notes the parallels between TOC and communicative approaches. She believes that it is important for teachers to make English lessons interesting so motivation is a feature of her teaching and she sees the teacher as

needing to be 'active' so as to create a lively atmosphere. She explains how a teacher can facilitate such an atmosphere in the following quotation from the baseline interview:

I think teachers should always be cheerful, make them [the pupils] feel happy even though they can't understand what the teacher is talking about but you are still smiling so they will feel more confident about learning a language. (Baseline interview, p.10).

She also states in the baseline interview that she thinks pupils learn most through 'application' for example doing work where they need to talk and listen in English, such as pair- and group-work. In this respect, she is similar to teacher A but different from teacher B. She believes in using the target language for all teaching purposes as much as possible so as to provide maximum exposure to the pupils and create an English environment. She is aware of Krashen's (1987) distinction between acquisition and learning and that she believes that acquisition is the most favourable route for pupil language learning. As she says, "For primary school students, I think acquisition is important for them. I believe that it's much more easy for them to acquire a language rather than learn a language". In other words, she has a clear rationale for using the target language in class, as she explains:

If they can try to listen to English more, it is easier for them to learn a language, I think it's strange if you learn, for example, French in a Chinese way with Chinese as a teaching medium ... I think it's a kind of acquisition and I have to give them an environment that English is the first language instead of Chinese. (Summative interview, p.1).

She also supports this viewpoint with reference to her own experience of living overseas for one year and that of her cousin who emigrated from Vietnam to USA and developed very good spoken English through immersion, despite remaining largely unaware of formal grammatical and orthographical properties.

Teacher C also evidences a strong ‘sense of professionalism’, a feature noted in a study by Ramsay & Oliver (1995) as being a characteristic of quality teachers. The better the qualifications and professional competence of a teacher, the more likely she is to become empowered to make positive use of her own professional judgement. For example, with regard to the setting of homework teacher C indicates that she will do what seems to her to be educationally sound even if it does not conform to parental expectations:

I always mention that I didn’t give you [the pupils] the assignment because you have finished it in class, but before that it seems to me that it is a must for the teachers to give assignments to them every day. But now, if the parents really come and ask me or challenge me, ‘why don’t you give my children assignments?’ I can explain that and I’ve got the points to explain to them. (Baseline interview, p.14)

This contrasts with anecdotal comments often made by in-service teachers that they feel obliged to carry out certain practices because of pressure from parents or principals.

5.3.4.2 Specific attitudes towards TOC

Teacher C is more positive towards TOC than the other two case teachers as evidenced by the tallying of the attitude scale responses. As indicated in table 5.2, in the pre-observation response she scored 106, considerably higher than the wider sample which had a mean of 86.55. She had the third highest tallied response of the group of 69 respondents. In the post-observation, teacher C’s tallied response increased by a further four points, totalling 110 compared with the group mean of 90.66. As for the other two teachers, the change was not statistically significant. For the post-observation, teacher C gave the second highest tallied response out of the 59 respondents. With respect to the six statements in the attitude scale, referring explicitly by name to TOC, she gave similar answers on both the pre- and post-administrations of the scale but was even more positive in the second response to the attitude scale. In both administrations of the scale, she

strongly believed that pupils will be more motivated under TOC; she believed that pupils will learn more under TOC; and she perceives that she is teaching according to TOC principles. In the pre-scale she was neutral about whether TOC was more effective than traditional approaches and neutral concerning the practicality of TOC, whilst in the post-scale, she believed that TOC approaches were more effective and that TOC was practical. She agreed with the statement, 'I support the principles of TOC' in the pre-scale and strongly agreed with it in the post-scale.

In the four interviews in which she was asked to choose from the options 'very positive, positive, undecided, negative, very negative', with respect to her attitude towards TOC, teacher C twice replied positive and twice replied "more than 'positive' but not 'very positive' ". She has a number of reasons for being positive about TOC: it is consistent with the communicative principles that she learnt in her pre-service training; she appreciates TOC teaching methods and rationale; and she believes in the concept of catering for individual learner differences and that teachers should strive to cater for these varied pupil characteristics in the classroom. Her attitude scale responses also show a strong belief in tailoring learning to the individual needs of pupils. In both the pre- and post-observation administrations of the attitude scale she strongly agreed with the following items, 'It is important to give pupils the opportunity to learn at their own pace', and 'The teacher should take into account pupils' needs and interests'. With respect to negative aspects of TOC, in common with the other two respondents she also expressed reservations about TOC assessment, recording and reporting, particularly in terms of

additional workload. As I discuss in 5.4.5, she also has misgivings about the pace of change with respect to TOC.

5.3.5 Summary/reconciliation of teacher attitudes and beliefs

The stated perceptions and beliefs of the three teachers are summarised in table 5.3 below. In terms of beliefs about teaching and learning, teacher B supports a more transmissive style of teaching, whilst teachers A and C see themselves more in terms of motivating pupils to carry out and learn from activities. In terms of attitudes towards TOC, teacher A shows a positive orientation towards TOC in the interview data, although the tallying of her attitude scale responses places her near to the mean of the wider sample of respondents. Teacher B is below the mean in the tallied attitude scale responses and seems to be rather cautious about TOC in her interview responses. Teacher C is very positive about TOC in her attitude scale responses and also exhibits a positive orientation in the interview data.

Table 5.3 Summary of teacher beliefs

Teacher	Beliefs about teaching and learning	Beliefs about appropriate language medium	Attitudes towards TOC
A	Emphasises motivation and putting language into use	Predominantly English, to provide maximum exposure	Positive about TOC, as evidenced by interview data and attitude scale; concerns about practicality
B	Emphasises transmission of information, teacher role 'to give lectures'	Mixed code so that pupils can follow the lesson	Claims to be positive in interview data but attitude scale indicates somewhat traditional orientation
C	Emphasises motivation and learning through doing	Predominantly English, believes in language acquisition	Positive in interview data, very positive as evidenced by attitude scale

5.4 Issues in the management of change

This sub-section focuses on RQ 6 and its implications. Five themes are developed, i) the extent of change at the individual and institutional level, ii) the perceived rushed implementation of TOC, iii) resistance to change, iv) the legitimisation of previous practice through TOC and v) the practicality of the innovation.

5.4.1 Extent of change

I explore the extent to which the teachers perceive that with the introduction of TOC, they changed their personal classroom teaching style and the extent of change brought about by TOC at the school and system level. Based on the interview data, teacher A seems to indicate that TOC has not led to major changes in her own teaching style, because she had previously been using communicative and activity approaches to teaching (5.2.1). She expresses her viewpoint in the following quotation:

Maybe the way of teaching I myself [have changed] not so much, I and the other three colleagues involved in TOC have adopted AA before. Maybe later if some of my colleagues who are accustomed to teach in a traditional way, the TOC teaching may be a big change for them. But to me the main change is I have to do recording of assessment and try to divide or diversify the learning targets into smaller written down descriptors. (Summative interview, p. 3)

As indicated above teacher A saw the main change as being in terms of assessment and that this represented a workload burden without bringing about any particular benefits to teachers, pupils or parents, as in the following statement, “[The new aspect was] to try to use some forms of formative assessment only. We were also doing formative assessment, but mainly from homework. And we found that after three years of experience, it’s not quite useful”.

Teacher B similarly feels that TOC has not led to much change in her teaching style in comparison with the previous year when she was using AA, as she states “last year, I also used the AA so it’s not a big difference”. The one difference she does mention is the use of materials in the new textbook which she perceives as more difficult. Similar to teacher A, teacher B also mentions that assessment is the TOC area which has had the most impact in terms of change, as she states, “Basically TOC is not having a great difference in comparison with the previous teaching methods in my school; it may have some additional things, for example, the assessment part”. For her more experienced colleagues, teacher B believes that TOC represents a considerable change as she explains:

I know that for rather a large number of teachers, maybe, the style of TOC is rather different to the traditional teaching, especially for those teachers who have already been teaching for over ten years, they may not accept the style of TOC. (Baseline interview, p. 12)

Teacher B also notes that societal and cultural changes provide a catalyst for school change:

It’s very different from what I learnt in primary school, now the children are very different from ten or twenty years ago, they have many new technologies, for example, computers and many up-dated things. So if the teaching is still following the traditional format, I think they are not interested, so the teacher needs to invent or create more activities in order to have sufficient involvement in the class. Basically the culture of society is changing. (Post-observation 3, p. 7)

Teacher C (similar to teacher A) does not regard TOC as a big change for her because she has been carrying out the related activity approach and also carrying out communicative principles in her teaching:

I think I didn’t change a lot, maybe my approach is similar but the style of planning is different, maybe before that [before the introduction of TOC] most of the materials are not so communicative so I have to adapt it or I have change it by myself, I have to do a lot of extra work for all these kinds of activities. But

for TOC class because the materials are ready made, it's more convenient for me to carry out those kind of activities, so I've got more time in doing some other work. (Baseline interview, p. 13)

The point that TOC can help to reduce workload in some way is interesting. Normally one would expect an innovation to increase teacher workloads and in fact all three teachers perceived that this was generally the case with TOC. On the issue of the extent of change brought about by TOC, teacher C comments as follows:

Actually it shouldn't be a big change because we already got the activity approach. But I think it turns out to become a big change for all the schools. Maybe they always say that they use activity approach but they were not really doing the real thing [see also 3.4.2]. So when they come to TOC, they always think it is a big change. (Post-analysis interview, p.5)

'The real thing' seems to echo the discussion of the mismatch between curriculum intentions and classroom realities in 3.4. Teacher C seems to be implying that schools were adopting AA in name but not implementing it in reality and there is indeed anecdotal opinion to support this viewpoint (see also 3.4.3).

5.4.2 Pace of change

The extent of change is also affected by the pace at which reform is attempted. Although the implementation of TOC was postponed from May 1993 to September 1995 (3.7.1), perceptions remained, particularly from teachers B and C, that the implementation of TOC was rather rushed. Teacher A, in contrast to the other two teachers, did not seem to be concerned about TOC being too rushed, although she did refer in the baseline interview to the heavy preparation workload for the first year of TOC implementation.

Teacher B presents her opinion as follows:

TOC is rather implemented in a rush, we suddenly know that we have to use this TOC, teachers may find it makes them nervous or they do not know what to do, some of them did not know the idea, they are not very clear why ED needs the school to do TOC. (Baseline interview, p. 12)

She pointed out in a subsequent interview that “I think it needs more time to have the teachers accustom to the kind of curriculum, because it is very different from what I have learned before”. Teacher B also made the point that there was something of a policy overload, in other words a tendency to rush from one innovation to another. By the time of the post-analysis interview in 1998, she perceived that TOC was no longer the top priority in the government educational agenda as indicated in 3.8:

I still think there are changes but there are more policies ... so maybe ... for example the school-based management and IT and extensive reading, many policies. So I don't think that ... I do think that TOC is not the priority of the ED's policy. Maybe it is changing ... (post-analysis interview, p. 3)

Teacher C also elaborates the notion of change for TOC being too rushed and hints at the need for an incremental approach to change (cf. 2.3):

Maybe it's too rushed for the school to run the TOC class, we have to adapt it and change bit by bit. First of all, we have changed the time for each lesson, change the format of teaching, before we just adapt the whole TOC, the TOC matter because we have to change the assessment task, the format of assessment, the format of report card, too many things at a go, so I don't think it is a good way to change the curriculum. (Baseline interview, p. 16)

She makes similar points in the post-analysis interview:

And also I think the assessment is being introduced too early. I think the ED should introduce or implement TOC step by step. The teaching approach come first, and then the assessment. I think that will be better. But it seems many things are too rushed. Even if they have already planned it year by year, they should look at the situation, the real situation. They [ED] should realize that they [the teachers] can't accustom to the first stage. They should not introduce or implement the other stages so early. (Post-analysis interview, p.5)

I indicated in 3.7.4, the proliferation of innovations in Hong Kong which are frequently developed in isolation of one another and I discuss the implications in 8.3.1.

5.4.3 Resistance to change

In 2.8.3, I pointed out that resistance to change was a natural and arguably healthy

response to change. The three teachers were not personally resistant to TOC themselves, mainly because for them it did not represent a major change, (5.4.1) and because the new curriculum was mainly congruent with their existing beliefs, although less so for teacher B (5.3) . For their colleagues, however, particularly the older or more traditionally-minded ones, TOC was viewed as a major change incompatible with their existing beliefs. Teacher A notes some resistance from colleagues but expressed this somewhat more tentatively stating, “some of our colleagues are a bit reluctant, not very but a bit to join TOC classes because to them it means a bigger workload, more complicated procedures of keeping assessment records”. It is possible that there is less resistance in teacher A’s schools because it is a somewhat elite school (high standard students) so morale may be higher.

Teacher B notes that in her school the onus to promote TOC lies mainly with the younger teachers (such as herself):

A so-called reform relies very much on those who are younger, the newcomers or those that have been here two or three years. Introducing new ideas needs the support of the young people rather than asking senior staff to do some new thing, it’s too difficult for them to accept the ideas. So if in the following years, the school wants to do better with TOC, it relies very much on the younger staff, the younger generation. I think for those who are over forty or fifty years old, I don’t think they will support the idea of TOC. And the principal hasn’t given any TOC subjects for the older ones. (Summative interview, p.7)

Teacher C also refers to the difficulty of changing teachers and how teachers may resist change:

I think for some of the teachers, starting from the very beginning, they believe TOC is not good so it is difficult to change their mind, for them they really have their point of view, they stand firmly on their point, so it is difficult to change their mind because they have taught for over 10 years or even 20 years. So it is difficult for me who has only taught for a few years to change their mind. (Post-observation interview, 2, p.7)

As the TOC co-ordinator in her school, teacher C has some obligation to try to develop positive feelings towards TOC. In the following quotation, she seems to propose the kind of mutual adaptation strategy (cf. 2.4) as a strategy to overcome resistance:

I hope to make it better ... and to make it more acceptable to some other colleagues, even they got points, their standpoint to say that TOC is not good and it's impossible in a Hong Kong classroom but I still think that we still got a way to do that, just we can change it slightly and to adapt it to suit our own situation. (Baseline interview, p.13)

Similarly, she comments on the need to mould the curriculum according to the prevailing realities as in the following quotation:

I would advise [other schools], don't try to follow the curriculum too much, sometimes you have to change it according to the real situation, don't try to teach everything, it's no use, so we have to adjust for the students. (Summative interview, p 9)

As indicated at various places in this chapter, resistance to the new assessment practices required by TOC was common. For example, teacher B mentions how the increased paperwork generated by the mechanisms for recording and reporting of assessment data is a psychological threat (cf. the discussion of emotional anxieties in 2.8.3):

The paperwork [is a drawback]. Some teachers feel psychologically threatened by the idea of TOC. In a direct way, the teachers will have a lot of paperwork. Quite a number of them complain that there is too much paperwork but personally I think I can accept that. (Summative interview, p.5)

The three major research studies on TOC (Clark *et al.*, (1999); Morris *et al.*, 1996; Morris *et al.*, 1999) all confirmed that assessment was the major problem area facing teachers implementing TOC. With reference to TOC assessment, Morris, Lo & Adamson (2000) point out that, "any reform which leads to an increase in workload that is of a clerical or procedural nature would not meet with the approval of teachers" (p.11).

5.4.4 Legitimisation of approaches

Morris *et al.*, (1996) state that in some schools TOC was adopted as a vehicle for countering inertia, whereby principals or senior teachers used TOC to further their own agenda in promoting innovative teaching methods. As such, the TOC reform was able to provide school heads or individual teachers with a way to legitimise attempts for improvement. For teachers A and C, TOC played a role in reinforcing the communicative methods which they were already using but which were not readily accepted by the colleagues. Teacher A points out how TOC prompts her colleagues to move away from traditional teaching towards more activity oriented learning:

Because we planned the activities in the scheme of work, to me it is an administrative way to keep your colleagues to do something that you think is a must. But before it is not planned in the scheme of work so not in the name of TOC so when time is in a hurry they don't do it and just give knowledge to pupils. (Baseline interview, p. 8)

A similar issue is raised by teacher C who points out that TOC provides a convenient pretext for her to implement the activities which she favours:

It is more flexible. Because it is TOC I can do a lot of activities and prepare a lot of things, I have an excuse, because it is TOC class so I can make it different from the other class. If everybody is traditional class, maybe if I do it in a different way then the others may say, 'why do you have to do so many things? we don't do it so if we compare with you, it seems that we are lazier than you'. So because it's TOC class, it's a kind of excuse or reason why I change my way of teaching. (Summative interview, p. 7)

To some extent TOC legitimises the adoption of the kind of approach that teacher C favours because of her beliefs and training. TOC, according to the above quotation, can protect her from negative feedback from colleagues. This was an unintended bi-product of TOC (cf. 3.8, 8.3.1).

5.4.5 Practicality

As indicated in 2.8.1, the perceived practicality of an innovation is one of the factors affecting its implementation. The attitude scale contained a specific statement on practicality and in both responses, teacher A agreed with the statement, “TOC is impractical in Hong Kong schools”. She explains why in the following interview extract:

Because the workload of each teacher in Hong Kong is very big. Every teacher has to teach at least thirty-two or thirty-three lessons in the week, that's already a big workload. The class size is also another factor, each teacher has to face at least thirty something pupils in a single class. One of the requirements of TOC is to give better information of pupils' performance for the parents, I think the amount of information we give to the parents before TOC is already enough, because we always contact with the pupils and we are able to inform the parents but if that change of curriculum asks us to do more, make more recording work, that really increases our workload and we feel hard. (Summative interview, p. 2-3)

One factor which affects the teacher perception of practicality is the availability of suitable teaching materials to implement the innovation (2.8.5). Teacher A sees the change of textbook as one of the benefits brought by TOC, “the change of curriculum forced publishers to produce better books, better textbooks”. Teacher B responded ‘uncertain’ to the statement on the practicality of TOC, in both versions of the attitude scale. From the interview data, it was not possible to infer any firm perspective on this issue. Teacher C responded ‘uncertain’ to the statement, “TOC is impractical in Hong Kong schools” in the first administration of the attitude scale and the second time she disagreed with the statement. This provides tentative evidence that she became more confident about the practicality of the innovation during its implementation. Her comments on TOC practicality echo the points discussed earlier about mutual adaptation:

I believe that based on the principles of TOC the teaching method is good, the methodology and the rationale is good but just that it can't ..., I don't mean that it

is impractical in Hong Kong, I think that it can be practical in Hong Kong, but I think we should change much more to accompany the carrying out, the process of TOC. (Post-observation interview 2, p. 7)

In the summative interview, teacher C also states, “when I put it into practice, I think that it is workable, and I believe some parts of it are successful, but not all”. In the final interview however, she says that TOC is not workable in Hong Kong in the following quotation:

TOC is not workable in Hong Kong, teachers have to be very alert to what is going on in the classroom. They have to keep their eyes on all the students and look at the pupils reaction carefully and to adapt their lesson, to tailor their lesson and put some traditional approach in the TOC but not too much, a way to help TOC to run smoothly and to implement TOC in a more natural way. I think rapid change is impossible but if you change it eventually bit by bit and step by step I think TOC can be applied to the all kinds of level. (Post-analysis interview, p.11)

As this seems in contradiction to her previous statements on TOC, the issue was followed up as follows:

R: Let me clarify. You said TOC is not workable in Hong Kong.

T: For some extent.

R: Why is that?

T: Because the preparation for teachers is not enough in Hong Kong. You just tell them you have to teach TOC. I give you three days' course and you know how to teach TOC. I think it's impossible. For us we have to learn at least three years in the college of education. But still some of them don't really very believe in the way of TOC. So how can you ask those teachers they taught for more than 10 or 20 years to believe in the three days' course that TOC is good for students. (Post-analysis interview, p.11-12)

Overall, the perceived impracticality of TOC appears to relate to the assessment rather than the teaching methods as indicated in various places during this chapter. Doyle & Ponder's framework for practicality (2.8.1) is applied to the data above in 8.3.3.

5.5 Teachers' perspectives on cultural issues in TOC

In 2.8.8, it was pointed out that innovations need to be culturally appropriate for the context in which they are being introduced, at both the micro or school level and the macro or societal level. It was argued that there is often some degree of cultural mismatch between indigenous traditions of teaching and learner-centred process orientated models derived from the West. This section discusses the teachers' views on cultural issues as they relate to their own attitudes and teaching styles and to TOC.

5.5.1 *Teacher A's cultural orientations*

Teacher A perceives that Hong Kong is a mixture of Western and Eastern characteristics and that she is a product of that mix. In the post-analysis interview she states, "my colleagues say that I have stronger Western [than Chinese] characteristics" and she concurs with this characterisation. Despite having resided in Hong Kong for her entire life, she perceives that her liberal upbringing and her interest in European history and Western literature have given her a strong sympathy for Western culture. She is also ambivalent about Chinese culture as she states, "many Chinese people in Hong Kong don't admire Chinese culture. I mean they don't admire all the things from Chinese tradition". She states a discomfort with the traditional Chinese teaching style of transmitting knowledge:

I don't quite like the teaching style of many teachers talk [i.e. the expository, or 'talking' style practised by many teachers]. But for me, it's also a lazy way. For me because I prepare the things for them [the pupils] to do and they were the main characters in the play and I am just ... I become an audience, I feel good. (Post-analysis interview, p.3)

When asked to elaborate on her characteristics as a teacher which make her more Western than Chinese, she highlights the importance of learning through play:

Playing is invaluable but some people [Hong Kong people?] don't see it, they may see that playing doesn't mean teaching, doesn't mean learning anything ... but I think knowledge is acquired but not only heard. Maybe through games, the points of knowledge they acquire is fewer, but it's deeper. (Post-analysis interview, p.3)

She does not emphasise discipline as much as her colleagues as she believes the advantage of pupils carrying out activities outweighs the problem of indiscipline. She has greater tolerance for noise and other disruptions than other teachers as she states in the post-analysis interview:

There is a bit of conflict [between the need for good discipline and the need to provide pupils with the opportunity to put language into practice]. Sometimes, it is unavoidable to have noise when they are playing games or when they are talking. And children walk around. Some teachers and some head teachers may not accept that. (Post-analysis interview, p.4)

She also refers to the influence of a number of socio-cultural aspects on the implementation of TOC. With respect to individual differences, her opinions are as follows:

Hong Kong is quite unique because it is a place encountered of two cultures, both West and Chinese. I think many Asian countries, they like to do things in collective manners and many people do the same thing. If anyone does not do that, that means he is outside the norm and he is very strange. But in Hong Kong, I think this is also one prevailing phenomenon. But sometimes, at the same time, parents and teachers also agree that every individual is unique and they have their own good points and strong points. (Post-analysis interview, p.1)

In other words, there seem to be both collectivist and individualistic elements in the Hong Kong situation which, depending on other contextual factors, may encourage or militate against catering for individual learner differences.

With respect to assessment, in the interview data she expresses the perception that parental and societal instincts are in favour of competitive, norm-referenced, summative modes of assessment. She states that parents and teachers who are already accustomed

to this kind of assessment believe that “this old system of assessment still has its value”. She also outlines how competition between schools seems to be part of the local culture, “I don’t know why but the schools in Hong Kong always want to compare with each other” (cf. 3.2.3). Similarly with respect to the idea of measuring pupil progress rather than making comparisons between students, she mentions “the idea of comparing oneself to oneself [i.e. one’s own progress] was new until a few years ago”. She also seems to hint at a perception that the recording process may be more culturally appropriate for other contexts rather than the Hong Kong one, as follows:

What makes us afraid is the recording work, because we really think that Hong Kong is a different environment from other countries. We have to handle big classes and our timetable is more dense than other teachers in other countries. (Baseline interview, p.3)

Teacher A also mentions in the following quotation the impact of non-subject-trained teachers and parental pressure on textbook use (cf. 3.3.2):

I know most teachers especially those who did not choose English as their elective tend to stick closer to the textbook. But for experienced teachers they won’t follow so strictly. But one source of pressure is from the parents. Children sometimes may go home and their parents may ask well, what did the teacher teach you today and then the children may say oh, she only played games and talk lots of things and maybe the mother said ‘did the teacher teach page 1?’. Oh no, because maybe the content the teacher taught was much more than page 1. That’s one misunderstanding. (Post-analysis interview, p.2)

These perceived parental wishes which seem to exert pressure on teachers to complete the syllabus or textbook are explored in relation to task-based learning in 7.3.2.

Overall, teacher A perceives that she is rather Westernised in her orientation to teaching, a theme I will develop further when I discuss her classroom behaviour in 6.2.2. Her comments on socio-cultural issues are mainly in response to my specific questions on this

issue, as opposed to points she raises independently herself in response to general questions. I tentatively infer from this that she does not regard potential socio-cultural mismatches as being as central a factor in TOC implementation, in comparison with concerns about class sizes and workloads that she raises on a number of occasions. She clearly does, however, perceive some mismatches between teacher and parental views on some salient TOC issues.

5.5.2 Teacher B's cultural orientations

I demonstrate in 6.2.3 that teacher B's classroom teaching mode is primarily a traditional Chinese teaching style of teaching as transmission. At the beginning of the post-analysis interview, I attempted to engage her in a discussion of her opinions of cultural aspects of TOC. Unfortunately, we seem to talk at somewhat cross-purposes:

- R: I want to start by asking something about cultural aspects. How would you describe traditional teacher's role in Chinese culture?
- T: Chinese role. I think ... the students can have their own thinking, critical thinking and they have to keep up with the world trend, such as the trend of IT.
- R: As a teacher yourself, do you feel a strong sense of Chineseness in your teaching? Or do you think you have some Western characteristics in your teaching?
- T: I think it is hard to say whether it is Chinese or Western but Hong Kong's whole style ... Because our students are from China, so I think too much English would be a big burden to them.
- R: What do you mean by Hong Kong style of teaching?
- T: Because I myself am also educated in this so-called British education, I think the use of languages is ... I think it is the so-called Hong Kong style. We have both Chinese and English when we study in kindergarten. (Post-analysis interview, p.1).

In her first response, she seems to be summarising recent trends in education in Hong Kong rather than traditional Chinese aspects, for example the reference to Information

Technology, which was being promoted by ED at the time of the interview. In her second and third utterances, she focuses on a feature of her own teaching (and many other Hong Kong teachers) namely the use of code-switching between Cantonese and English (see also 6.2.3). This is indeed a feature of the Hong Kong culture but has a general relevance to the teaching of English rather than to TOC specifically. Other attempts at eliciting discussion on socio-cultural issues failed to elicit any clearly identifiable viewpoint so no additional data from teacher B is presented in this sub-section.

In general, teacher B seems not to have a clear viewpoint on the socio-cultural appropriacy of TOC, although one can tentatively infer, at least by default, that she does not seem to view any cultural mismatches as being a significant factor in the implementation of TOC. For example, she states that the Hong Kong orientation towards collectivism does not play any role in making catering for individual learner differences problematic. This is somewhat contrary to the argument I put forward in 8.5.2.

5.5.3 Teacher C's cultural orientations

Teacher C is the only one of the three teachers who has spent a sustained period of time overseas, namely one year in England when she was studying for a B.Ed degree. In addition, she often spends her long summer holiday travelling in Europe. With respect to her teaching, she perceives herself as combining both Western and Chinese characteristics as in the following excerpt:

I think I try to put some more Western culture in my teaching but the problem is that I am also Chinese. I think my sense of Chinese is much stronger than Western culture. Sometimes when I have to teach them not for the knowledge, but some kind of moral education, I have to apply more Chinese culture in it. Maybe some Western culture they can't apply in the Hong Kong situation so I

have to change it back to Chinese culture. But some interesting things about Western culture, I will tell them. (Post-analysis interview, p.4)

She also alludes to the fast-paced Hong Kong lifestyle which seems to demand a quick return for a minimum outlay. As she states in the post-analysis interview, “I think many pupils have got bad attitudes in learning. They always like everything to be like instant noodles. They want to get everything in one lesson”. In the summative interview, she had already applied a similar point to the notion of code-switching between English and Cantonese:

In a Chinese society, maybe everything seems to have to go very fast, they [the pupils] have to spend little time but they have to get a very good result, so maybe some teachers may think that Cantonese is the kind of medium which is better than using just English to explain English. (Summative interview, p.1)

It is worth speculating whether the ‘rushed’ nature of the Hong Kong lifestyle, may encourage teaching as transmission so as to facilitate the passing of information as quickly as possible. I return to this issue in 7.3.2 when I discuss the teacher perception of the need to complete the syllabus.

Teacher C expresses some doubts about the cultural appropriateness of TOC for the Hong Kong context. Her misgivings relate to two areas. Firstly, she believes the textbooks are mainly written by Westerners who do not really understand the local school culture. Secondly, she mentions the idealistic nature of some TOC activities which could be more suitably carried out within a freer more spacious Western context. “Maybe in Western countries they can bring students to some parks or some real situations to teach them English or some other subjects outside school. But in Hong Kong it is quite complicated to bring students outside school”. With respect to assessment, she does not emphasise socio-cultural factors as being significant but instead focuses on the difficulties of

changing people's beliefs and the lack of mutual trust between parents and teachers. As she states in the post-analysis interview, "teachers do not have confidence on parents and parents do not have confidence on this new kind of thing". This seems similar to the viewpoint expressed by teacher A above. With respect to individual learner differences, she notes the pragmatism of parents in the following quotation:

Some parents think that if their children are weak, they hope that there will be more individual help for their children. But then for some parents they got brighter children, they will hope that there will be more concern on their children. Or they believe that no matter what, there will be some students who are behind the level. We should teach the normal level so that all the children can develop normally without making slow learning because the teachers may have to take care of the slow learners. I think it is really difficult because I can't say that parents don't want individual help but they believe that if all the children are okay, we don't have to do that. (Post-analysis interview, p.3)

Overall, teacher C sees herself as having more of a Chinese than a Western orientation towards education, although she sees herself as drawing on both East and West. In 6.2.3 I indicate how her classroom teaching style seems to draw on both traditional transmissive influences and more facilitative process elements. In terms of socio-cultural aspects, she notes the fast-paced Hong Kong lifestyle but does not explicitly link this to the implementation of TOC. She has some misgivings about the cultural appropriateness of TOC in terms of suitability of textbooks and that some suggested TOC activities are not practical for the Hong Kong context. She also mentions a lack of shared understanding between parents and teachers as being a factor which may impinge negatively on TOC implementation.

5.5.4 Reconciliation

Teacher A and teacher C seem to share somewhat similar characteristics in terms of sharing a mixture of 'traditional' Chinese attributes and more 'liberal' Western attributes.

Teacher B, on the other hand, seems to have a more traditional orientation, for example, in terms of her emphasis on discipline and transmissive teaching. Teachers A and C both focus on how parents, as a product of the Hong Kong cultural context, perceive education in general, and specific features of TOC. They note a number of mismatches between parental views and features of TOC. In contrast, teacher B makes little reference to the influence of parents on the teaching and learning process or their perspective on TOC-related issues. A number of implications arising from this discussion are presented in 8.5.

5.6 Summary of chapter

This chapter has explored teachers' understandings of TOC, their beliefs about teaching and learning, their attitudes towards TOC and their perspectives on cultural issues impacting on TOC. The data on these topics is summarised in table 5.10 below.

Table 5.4 Summary of teacher understandings, attitudes and perceptions

Teacher	Understanding of TOC	Beliefs about teaching and learning	Attitude towards TOC	Cultural perspectives
A	Demonstrates understanding of principles and practice	Emphasises motivation and putting language into use	Positive about TOC, as evidenced by interview data and attitude scale; concerns about practicality	Perceived as having Western characteristics; some doubts about cultural appropriacy of catering for individual learner differences and TOC assessment, recording and reporting

B	Developing an understanding of principles and practice	Emphasis giving give 'lectures', transmission of information	Claims to be positive in interview data but attitude scale indicates somewhat traditional orientation	No pattern emerges from the interviews
C	Demonstrates understanding of principles and practice	Emphasises motivation and learning through doing	Positive in interview data, very positive as evidenced by attitude scale	Perceives herself as having Chinese and Western influences; some doubts about cultural appropriacy of textbooks

This chapter foregrounds the data presented in chapters 6 and 7 regarding how the teachers actually implement TOC in their classrooms. Taken as a whole the three chapters indicate, among other things, the extent to which the teachers expressed attitudes are operationalised in the classroom.

CHAPTER 6 CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION OF TOC

6.1 Scope of chapter

This chapter focuses on the extent of implementation of TOC in the three classrooms under investigation and principally addresses the following research question:

RQ3 To what extent do the teachers perceive that they are teaching according to TOC principles and to what extent are they *actually* teaching according to TOC principles?

The chapter begins by making some general observations about the three teaching contexts and about the teachers' approaches in the classroom in order to set the scene for the discussion of the extent of implementation of TOC, later in the chapter.

Lesson transcripts (see table 6.1 for transcript conventions) are used in chapters 6 and 7 in order to exemplify a number of themes arising in the lessons of the three teachers. It is not claimed that the transcripts are necessarily representative of the larger corpus of lessons. Their choice is based on the fact that they exemplify aspects of the teachers' classroom *modus operandi* and/or because they carry particular implications for TOC implementation and/or because they are particularly able to enhance understanding of the process of TOC implementation (see also 4.5.4.5). Transcripts 6.1-6.4 are used to illustrate features of the teaching of the three teachers. Discussion of two specific TOC features, task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences follows in chapter 7.

Table 6.1 Transcription conventions

T = Teacher
R = Researcher
<u>LL</u> = Group of learners choral
<u>LLL</u> = Whole class choral
L1, L2 etc. = identified learner
[<i>in italics</i>] = commentary
... = pause
/ = overlapping speech
// = interrupted
CAPITALISATION = emphasis
C-A-P-I-T-A-L-I-S-A-T-I-O-N = word spelt out letter by letter
<i>Text in this font</i> = Chinese

6.2 The three teachers in the classroom

6.2.1 Introduction

Here I state some of the key characteristics of the schools and teachers, based on the classroom observation and interview data. Table 6.2 below summarises briefly for comparative purposes selected key elements of the respective teaching contexts.

Table 6.2 Summary comparison of teaching contexts

	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C
Year level	Primary 1 – age 6-7	Primary 2 – age 7-8	Primary 1 – age 6-7
Class size	32	31	25
Textbook	On Target with Oxford	On Target with Oxford	New Welcome to English
Pupil ability	High	Average	Average

6.2.2 Teacher A in the classroom

I first examine the school context and then discuss some relevant features of teacher A's

teaching.

6.2.2.1 Background to school

For teacher A, her school is a whole-day school situated in the New Territories with pupils above average⁵ in terms of ability and generally coming from middle-class backgrounds. At the time of the study she was teaching a P1 class of thirty three pupils (twenty boys and thirteen girls), a slightly unusually imbalanced gender mix. There is a wide range of ability in the class, two or three of the pupils are very able in English due to the fact that they have recently returned to Hong Kong from an English speaking overseas country or that one of the parents is a native speaker of English, the weaker pupils are around the Hong Kong average for P1 pupils. As I argue in the discussion of transcripts 6.1 and 7.1, the class are very lively and perhaps partly due to the wide disparity in ability, there are quite a few discipline problems, particularly amongst some of the boys. Her school is a whole-day (cf. 3.3.1) school situated in a quiet location. She provides some background to the school and the pupils in the baseline interview, as follows:

This school has opened for six years and for the main part the students are quite well-off, about one third of them have Filipina maids in their homes and many parents are professionals like firemen, policemen, merchants, so they [the pupils] are not afraid of English and the parents have high expectations for the pupils. Many of them don't have real discipline problems, they are only naughty and they like to express themselves. They are very creative, very talkative but we don't find big discipline problems like those primary schools in the housing estates. In terms of ability they are more confident in themselves than the other pupils because of their well-off family background. They don't have to worry about anything and their parents love them very much and dare not frustrate them. So always they are overconfident in themselves. (Baseline interview, p.1)

The last two sentences carry the connotation of the children being somewhat indulged by their parents, who "dare not frustrate them". In terms of academic standards, based on

the comments of the teacher, my own observations in the school and the opinions of a colleague whose daughter studies in the school, the available evidence (see also note 5) indicates that the school is in the top 20% of the primary school ability range in Hong Kong. My observations took place during the first year of TOC implementation in the school, although it has carried out AA (3.4.3) in P1-P3 classes since its inception. She describes the school decision to start TOC as “to follow the trend” and indicates that the school principal was a prime instigator of TOC adoption. She observes that he appears positive about TOC but does not adopt a particularly hands-on role.

Table 6.3 below provides some detail about the teaching content covered by teacher A in the lessons observed during the three cycles of observation.

Table 6.3 Summary of topics/themes in teacher A’s lessons

	Observation cycle 1	Observation cycle 2	Observation cycle 3
Main topics/themes	Colours. In the park.	Fruits. Animals.	Sounds.
Principal language focus	What colour is it? What colour is the nose/hair etc. Park vocabulary: slide, roundabout, swing etc.	Smell this, is it nice? What is it? Identifying animals Do you like + animals?	Identifying names of sounds, vocabulary - the wind, a drill, a car, a telephone, raindrops, an aeroplane, waves It is the noise of a ... Do you like the noise of a ...?
Main activities/tasks	Guessing colours. Colouring and describing a clown.	Smelling and identifying fruits from a plate of fruits provided by teacher. Write down two animals that you like, then mingling activity to find	Making and guessing noises. Pair-work, Do you like the noise of a ..? Written text about noises that they like or

		classmates who have chosen the same animals. Making a zoo by writing names of animals on cut-outs.	dislike.
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6.2.2.2 Features of Teacher A's teaching

Two prominent elements of teacher A's classroom style are putting English into use and pupil motivation or enjoyment. As she states in the post-analysis interview, "The first important thing is, I want to let them use the language. To let them enjoy is maybe the second important thing". As evidenced by category A of the classroom observation schedule (4.5.4.3), she involves pupils actively in a variety of different activities, such as games, singing, drawing and short pupil presentations (see Appendix 4, table 4.1). Lessons are generally organised so as to permit interactions between pupils in English. Through the tallying of category B of the observation schedule, it can be seen that in terms of participant organisation, interactions between pupils occur more frequently for teacher A than for teachers B and C (Appendix 4, tables 4.2, 4.4 and 4.6). The atmosphere in the class is very lively, many of the boys in particular tend to be boisterous and discipline problems are common in terms of inattentiveness, for example, pupils talking while the teacher is talking. The teacher often gives reminders about behaviour (sometimes in Cantonese, sometimes in English) but creates an impression of benevolence akin to the indulgent parents that she has described, who "dare not frustrate" their "overconfident" offspring (see above). As she herself states in the post-analysis interview, "I'm quite liberal and I accept many things they [my colleagues] won't accept".

Transcript 6.1 below exemplifies some of these features of teacher A's teaching. At the start of this lesson, the teacher asks the pupils to collect their stools and come to the front of the class so that they can be more concentrated on what she is saying. She explains that she does this about three times a month. It takes nearly five minutes to arrange the seating as the pupils take the opportunity to converse and make noise. One boy is unwilling to join the others and the teacher spends some time cajoling him to come to the front of the class. The 'teaching' part of the lesson begins as in transcript 6.1 below:

Lesson Transcript 6.1

Line No.	
1	[... <i>Background noise</i>]
	T: ... Let's draw a clown together. Do you know what is a clown? A clown is a clown . Choose the nose first. Choose the nose first. What colour is the nose? What colour is the nose?
5	LL: Red/Red.
	T: It may not be red. It may be green. It may be black. It may be er.. other colour. OK. What colour would you like the nose?
	LL: RED!
10	T: OK. All of you like red nose. So the nose of the clown is like a circle. Write a circle. This is look like a square or a rectangle. OK. And then, the eyes. What colour are the eyes? What colour are the eyes? Jonathan?
	L1: ...
	T: What? What colour are the eyes? What do you suggest? Mmmm, Your own suggestion . What colour are the eyes, Cynthia?
15	L2: Black.
	T: Black. Black eyes. But there is no black chalk. So let's write a star with chalk.
	L2: OK.
	T: But Cynthia said there is no black chalk. The eyes. The eyes. What colour do you like the mouth? What colour is the mouth?
20	LL: Red/Red!
	T: Don't touch! Why do you try to use orange?
	LL: Yellow/yellow.

	T: What do you say? L3: Green and yellow.
25	T: Green and yellow! Good. So I try to draw. This time it's yellow. Yellow. Half of the mouth is yellow ... and then half of the mouth is green. Ah, this one is not a <i>[Inaudible]</i> I think.
	LL: <i>[giggles]</i>
30	L4: <i>[calls out]</i> Can I draw something on the blackboard? I want to draw the clown's teeth.
	T: Can't put it. This one is a bit of chalk. So. OK. OK. This is the mouth. This is green and yellow. And then ... er what shape is the face? A circle? A triangle or a square? What do you like? Tommy, what did I say?
	L5: Rectangle.
35	T: So, speak in English. LL: Rectangle/Rectangle <i>[loud voices]</i> .
	T: Rectangle. OK. What colour? What colour is the face? What colour is the face? LL: White/white/white <i>[shouting]</i> .
40	T: What colour? Don't shout. I don't want it. L6: White.
	T: Good! Good. I think it is true and it is a rectangle. OK. I try to draw. What colour is the hair? What colour is the hair? LL: <i>[Lots of background noise]</i>
45	T: Jenny. L7: Red.
	T: Red hair. What do you say? What colour do you like, Heather? L8: Orange.
	T: Orange hair. OK. I like ... curly or straight? These are straight. Straight or curly? What do you like? Curly or straight? LL: Curly/curly <i>[loud voices]</i> . L9: Curly.
50	T: Curly. OK. I draw. Curly orange hair. <i>[Lots of background noise]</i>
55	T: What colour are the ears? What colour are the ears? What colour are the ears? What colour are the ears? Mmm... L10: Gold and black.
	T: Tommy what do you say? L11:

60	T: Green ears. OK. What ear is green? What shape is it, a triangle? Circle? A triangle. Triangle. And then green. And then, what colour is this ear? Look! Some of it ... LL: Purple/purple [<i>loud voices</i>].
65	T: What do you think this ear? What should the colour be? Mmm ... Beatrice, what do you say? L: Pink. T: Pink. OK. This ear is pink. This finished the clown. You can ask I ask ... what colour ... is ... the ... blah blah blah blah. Or what colour are the ... blah blah blah blah. So, let's practise. What colour is the nose? LLL: What colour is the nose?
70	T: We know the question. What colour is the nose? LLL: What colour is the nose? T: What colour is the hair? LLL: What colour is the hair?

Later in the lesson, they construct together a text to describe the clown, beginning 'This is Ping. He is a clown. His eyes are ... etc.' Pupils are then given a worksheet with a clown on it; they are asked to colour the clown as they wish and then write appropriate sentences about it. Within the framework provided, this gives them some opportunity to create their own four or five line text about their clown and its colours. This was classified as a task, within the TOC definition of task from 3.6.3, in that there was a purpose, a process and a product with pupils using their own framework of knowledge and skill to create a text at their own level. In this lesson, one can identify a number of features of teacher A's teaching. She likes to involve the pupils actively in lessons, in this case contributing their ideas to the appearance and colour of the clown. The transcript contains a number of examples of pupil short answers in English (e.g. lines 5, 8, 15, 20) and some more extended utterances (e.g. line 29) where a pupil communicates a need and preference through a request in the target language. These extracts contain a

classroom demonstration of her stated belief in putting language into use. Her belief in motivation is also exemplified through an activity which pupils find interesting, for example, the appearance and colouring of the clown is quite amusing to the pupils (e.g. lines 25, 37). The teacher herself stated in the post-observation interview that she found this part most satisfying, “When I was doing the process writing with them asking them to suggest the colour and shape of the clown, they seemed to enjoy it so I think that part is quite good”. In the writing task, the pupils have the opportunity to put into use the language that they have learnt. There is also a certain amount of noise and boisterousness particularly from some of the boys. *As the teacher observes in the post-analysis interview*, “sometimes it’s unavoidable to have noise when they are playing games or when they are talking. And children walk around. Some teachers and some head teachers may not accept that”. This tension between lively interesting activities *and good discipline* is explored more fully in 7.3.6.

The extract contains an example of teacher A putting into practice her stated beliefs (5.3.2) about pupil motivation and involvement. This finding has some significance because there is plenty of evidence in the literature (2.7.1, 2.8.3) which finds a mismatch between teachers’ stated beliefs and their actual classroom practices. With respect to TOC, her emphases on motivation, enjoyment and putting language into use indicate a general orientation towards teaching in line with the principles of TOC. Overall, in terms of degree of implementation the lesson from which transcript 6.1 is extracted, was classified on category H of the observation schedule as denoting ‘widespread evidence of TOC principles’ by applying the criteria attached in Appendix 2 (category H).

6.2.3 *Teacher B in the classroom*

I first examine the school context and then discuss some relevant features of teacher B's teaching.

6.2.3.1 Background to school

At the time of the study, teacher B was teaching a P2 class of thirty one pupils in a whole-day school situated in a traditional urban area in Kowloon. The school admits pupils of roughly average ability (see note 5), one of her students is from the Philippines and a number of them are recently arrived immigrants from mainland China. She characterises the background of the pupils and parents in the following extracts from the baseline interview:

Most of the students came from China, over 85%, so the standard of the school is expected to be a little bit lower when compared to the other schools, so teaching English is rather a problem here. ... The parents come from lower classes, both the parents need to work in the daytime so the students lack care and they sometimes have to be left at home alone and nobody will teach them how to do words or the revision. So our school has launched a programme for them, there is a one and a half hour so-called tutorial programme but the criteria is that they just came to Hong Kong for a few months [i.e recent new immigrants from China]. (Baseline interview, p.1)

It is the second year of TOC implementation in the school and the third year of AA implementation in the school. She states that the reason for the introduction of the TOC in the school is "to follow the trend". The principal of her school seems highly committed and was studying part-time during the period of the research for an M.Ed. It is the fourth year of his principalship of the school. She describes his attitude towards TOC as follows:

Positive and supportive as well. He actually guides the teachers and gives a very positive attitude to us, we can feel that he is rather confident about TOC and also if we have any problems about TOC he will give us some help or give us some references. (Baseline interview, p.3-4)

The principal teaches Maths and has participated in the Maths TOC seminar so is prepared to involve himself directly in teaching as well as in TOC development, in contrast with the principals in the schools of teachers A and C who seem to take a more hands-off role.

Table 6.4 below provides some background information about the teaching content covered by teacher B in the lessons observed during the three cycles of observation.

Table 6.4 Summary of topics/themes in teacher B's lessons

	Observation cycle 1	Observation cycle 2	Observation cycle 3
Main topics/themes	Picnic. Hong Kong park and its facilities; park signs.	Five senses – smell. Riddles. Juices.	Colours. Text – Tam family on the beach.
Principal language focus	Vocabulary - A pair of .., a packet of .. What have you got? I've got a ... Park vocabulary: playground, slide, swings, plant house, aviary. Where is ..? Where are ...? Don't feed the birds. Don't pick the flowers.	What can you smell? I can smell ... Riddles describing a food - it is small, it smooth, it is red. What is it? What have you got? Juices - apple, orange, lime, lemon.	Colours e.g. red + green = purple Beach vocabulary - shells, sandcastles, rocks. Where is Mr Tam? What is he doing? Where is/are with classroom objects using prepositions.
Main activities/tasks	Pair-work finding out what classmates are taking to the picnic. What have you got? I've got a ...	Smelling activity.	Experiment with water colours, mixing two colours together.

6.2.3.2 Features of teacher B's teaching

In contrast to teacher A who is rather liberal with regard to discipline, teacher B believes strongly in the necessity for firm discipline. As she states in the post-analysis interview,

“I insist on a well-organised and well-disciplined class”. She also points out that this is one of the priorities of her principal. She sees schooling as performing an important socialising function, where young pupils receive moral education. She emphasises the nature of the group, social cohesion and togetherness as the class progress together. She seems less comfortable with situations where pupils pursue diversity or there is variation in response, for example during individual or group work. A significant feature of teacher B’s teaching, identified from both category E in the observation schedule and the qualitative field notes is code-switching from English to Cantonese. As noted in 5.3.3 and evidenced in transcripts 6.2 and 6.3 below, she supplements her English with comments in Cantonese. She states the purpose of this mixed code as to ensure pupil comprehension so that no-one gets left behind. Cantonese is also used for humour and to reinforce the group solidarity.

Teacher B has a predominantly didactic approach to teaching, where the teacher presentation of knowledge is stressed and there is less emphasis than teachers A and C on pupils carrying out activities or tasks. The tallying of category A1 (Appendix 4) from the observation schedule across the three cycles produces a figure of 60% for direct teaching for teacher B as opposed to 36% for teacher A and 46% for teacher C. She outlines the main focuses of her teaching in an extract from the first post-observation interview:

I spend most of the time teaching the vocab and the structures before doing the activities, actually the activities time is very limited, they just can have a chance to practise or to do activity once only and then I have to go to another topic. Explaining and giving them more consolidation of knowledge is much more important, because they may forget the items that I have taught, so the consolidation of what I have taught is much more important than doing activities. (Post-observation 1, p.4)

As such she tends to dominate the classroom situation with pupils playing a relatively passive role in the classroom process. By the time of the post-lesson interview for the third cycle of observations, she does reflect on issues, such as variety in the lessons and the need for her to allow pupils more autonomy, when she states, “The variety of the lessons is not satisfactory. Activities can be more pupil-centred, sometimes I dominate the activities, I speak too much”. This seems to be evidence that she is beginning to reflect on her role in the classroom and develop awareness of the fact that she tends to carry out too much direct teaching at the expense of pupil involvement i.e. an approach which inhibits TOC implementation.

The following transcript is taken from a lesson in the first cycle of observation and indicates a number of features of teacher B’s teaching. Similarly to teacher A in transcript 6.1, teacher B asks the pupils to bring their stools and come to the front. My field notes (4.5.4.4) indicate that she did this in all seventeen of the observed lessons. The routines are well-operationalised and are completed quickly and efficiently by the pupils.

Lesson transcript 6.2

Line No.	
1	T: OK. Group B please come up. ... <i>[Pupils come up with stools]</i> ... Group C ... <i>[Pupils come up with stools]</i> ... OK. Group D ... OK. Please look at the board please. I’ve write down a date on the board. So, can you guess why I write this date on the board? Can you remember any special things happen on this date?
5	<i>What happens on the 12th of December?</i>
	LLL: <i>A trip!// A trip!</i>
	T: <i>[name]</i>

10	<p>L1: <i>A trip.</i></p> <p>T: OK. Good. We're having a ... We're having a ... school picnic.</p> <p>LLL: School picnic.</p>
	<p>T: Picnic.</p> <p>LLL: Picnic.</p> <p>T: Picnic.</p> <p>LLL: Picnic.</p>
15	<p>T: School picnic.</p> <p>LLL: School picnic.</p> <p>T: So next Tuesday we are going to have a school picnic.</p> <p>LLL: School picnic.</p>
20	<p>T: Picnic.</p> <p>LLL: Picnic.</p> <p>T: Picnic.</p> <p>LLL: Picnic.</p>
25	<p>T: Who will go to the school picnic? Who will go to the school picnic please raise up your hand? <i>Who is going on the picnic? Put up your hand?</i> ... OK. Thank you. Put down your hands. And who will not go to the school picnic? Who will not go to the picnic? ... OK. Thank you ... Have you prepared for you school picnic? <i>Have you prepared for your school picnic?</i> Have you prepared anything for you next Tuesday school picnic? OK ... [name]</p> <p>L2: Yes.</p>
30	<p>T: Yes. So ... what have you prepared? What have you prepared? <i>What have you prepared? What have you prepared?</i></p> <p>L2: ... [Inaudible]</p>
35	<p>T: OK ... Can you draw the things on the board for me, please. Draw. <i>Come here.</i> So I am asking her to draw the things that she will bring to next Tuesday's picnic. Let's see what she will bring. <i>Come here and draw the thing.</i> And we will guess what she is drawing ... OK. Thank you. Any more suggestion?</p> <p>L3: <i>What is it?</i></p> <p>L4: <i>Glasses, camera lens.</i></p>
40	<p>T: Beside this thing, what other things will you bring? Can you give me some examples? <i>What will you bring besides this?</i> ... Please draw the picture here ...</p> <p>L5: <i>What is it?</i></p>

45	L6: <i>Cookie.</i>
	T: Anymore? Who would like to draw something on the board for me? <i>Who would like to come here and draw other things? What would you bring to the picnic? ... [name] ...</i> OK. Thank you.

It can be seen in this transcript that pupil utterances in English are restricted to one or two words, principally choral repetition after the teacher, for example, lines 9-22. As noted above, it is common for the teacher to repeat utterances in Cantonese, for example, lines 5, 24, 27, 30-31, 35. Perhaps, following this lead, when pupils are communicating as opposed to repeating, they tend to use Cantonese, lines 6, 37, 38, 42, 43.

A further extract from the same lesson illustrates another feature of teacher B's lessons, the use of Cantonese for humorous purposes (e.g. line 12). (An additional example of the use of humour in Cantonese in her lessons is discussed in relation to task-based learning in transcript 7.3).

Lesson transcript 6.3

Line No.	
1	T: Can you give me one example for a pair? <i>What do we use that is in a pair?</i> When do you use the adjective a pair of? [name]
	L1: Shoes.
5	T: Shoes are a pair of. Do you just wear one shoe?
	L2: No.
	T: No. We wear a pair of shoes. Any more examples? ...
	T: [After discussing a few examples] <i>Other than wearing shoes, what else do you wear?</i>
	L3: [Inaudible]
10	T: Good. A pair of socks. Socks.
	L4: <i>What is</i> sock?

	T: <i>Would you wear one sock?</i>
	LL: <i>[Laugh]</i>
	T: Would you wear one sock? No. You would wear a pair of socks. OK.

The feature of code switching, prominent in all of the seventeen observed lessons, can be seen in transcripts 6.2 (e.g. lines 4-5, 23-24, 26-27) and 6.3 (e.g. lines 1, 6-8, 12-14). TOC documents do not state a clear policy on mother tongue use, although the current primary English syllabus (ED, 1997), which is based on TOC, suggests:

In the English lesson, the teacher has to speak and use English as frequently as possible, not only for instructional purposes, but also for carrying out daily classroom routines, organising teaching activities and providing opportunities for exposure to the learners. (p.86)

The pros and cons of such code switching are outside the scope of the thesis, but it seems that her perception is that the use of Cantonese helps pupils to follow what is going on in the lesson. It is tentatively suggested that widespread use of code-switching does not preclude TOC implementation but is an inhibiting factor in that it may increase the length of teacher utterances, may be allied to a transmissive view of teaching and does not provide a good model for pupils to put English into use through tasks (see also 7.3.8). Overall, unlike teacher A, one can note that the general orientation to teaching of teacher B seems not to be congruent with TOC teaching. She adopts a mainly whole-class, transmissive, teacher-centred approach rather than one focusing on pupils putting language into use through tasks or individualised learning.

6.2.4 Teacher C in the classroom

I first examine the school context and then discuss some relevant features of teacher C's teaching.

6.2.4.1 Background to school

At the time of the study, teacher C was teaching a P1 class of twenty six pupils in the afternoon section of a bi-sessional school (cf. 3.3.1) in a new town on the outskirts of Kowloon, one of the major urban areas in Hong Kong. The school is near to public housing estates and draws much of its intake from neighbouring areas. In the baseline interview she expressed the following perceptions: the pupils do not come from particularly good backgrounds; their academic results are not especially good; they enjoy their school life; and parents have a preference for morning or whole-day schools rather than afternoon ones (cf. 3.2). She describes the pupil ability as, “In comparison with the other primary schools in Hong Kong, the ability, I think, is just around average but most of them are below average”.

It is the first year that the school is carrying out TOC, although they have been carrying out AA in P1-P3 for a number of years. The principal has been in post for eight years since the founding of the school. He has been in frail health and seemed not eager to discuss issues related to TOC. Teacher C describes his attitude towards TOC as:

Neutral, maybe it's because he sees it is really a hard job for teachers to run TOC courses, because we [the p.m. section of the school] are going to fade out and most probably become a whole-day school. So he always mentioned that if we don't have a P1 class, we don't do the TOC, but still we started and once we started he always encourages me. (Baseline interview, p. 5)

The principal gives her a high degree of autonomy, as she explains:

Even he thinks we shouldn't do that [implement TOC] but once we started, he gives a full support to me and if I want to take some courses he always mentions that 'don't care about the lessons'. He thinks that it is good for me to take some courses and he always mentioned to encourage my colleagues to go out and take some courses. He's got no control on what I did, I can do it whatever I like. (Baseline interview, p. 5)

In fact, in the middle of the academic year, the principal leaves rather suddenly and is replaced by a new principal. Teacher C stated that the change of principal did not have any particular impact on her at the classroom level. Table 6.5 below provides some background information about the teaching content covered by her in the lessons observed during the three cycles of observation.

Table 6.5 Summary of topics/themes in teacher C's lessons

	Observation Cycle 1	Observation Cycle 2	Observation Cycle 3
Main topics/themes	Families.	Five senses – seeing. Colours.	Adjectives. Animals.
Principal language focus	Family vocabulary - father, sister, grandmother etc. Who are they? A monster's description of his family; Who is this? This is my/his/her + family members.	What can you see? I can see a/some + prepositions on, in, near.	Using adjectives to describe people and animals - kind, rude, fierce, afraid.
Main activities/tasks	Pair- and group work discussing photos.	Group work asking the group leader, 'What can you see?' Writing some sentences about what they can see from the window.	Group work completing a story by filling in blanks.

6.2.4.2 Features of teacher C's teaching

The field notes and interview data indicate that teacher C places emphasis on pupil involvement, pupil enjoyment and adopting an encouraging, supportive stance towards the pupils, characteristics highly similar to teacher A. Discipline problems seldom arise

but she is still able to motivate and involve pupils actively in the lessons. In the sense that she is able to combine an orderly classroom atmosphere with motivation and pupil involvement, teacher C unifies the positive traits of teachers A and B into teaching of very high quality (Carless, 1998). Her use of English medium as evidenced in transcript 6.4 below facilitates pupil comprehension, through the use of strategies, such as the use of attractive visual aids, reference to the here and now, clear articulation, short, simple sentences, focused repetition of language items, question and answer involving pupils. Through these methods, she is able to maintain consistent use of English during whole-class teaching so as to provide maximum amount of exposure to the target language (Carless, 1998).

Transcript 6.4 from the first cycle of observation briefly introduces some of these characteristics. The language focus was on the formulation of questions using ‘who’ e.g. ‘Who is this? Who are they?’ within the theme of families e.g. ‘This is my brother/sister’. ‘This is his/her mother/father’. For this lesson, the pupils were asked to bring their own family photos.

Lesson Transcript 6.4

Line No.	
1	<i>[She takes out an attractive enlarged photo of her family]</i>
5	<p>T: Look at me (<i>points to herself</i>). I am Miss Lee. My name is Miss Lee. I am Miss Lee. My name is Miss Lee. And this (<i>points to the photo</i>) is my family. And this is my family. Miss Lee’s family. This is my family. Who is this (<i>points</i>)? Who is this? Who is this?</p> <p>L1: This is Miss Lee</p> <p>L2: This is Miss Lee</p> <p>L3: This is Miss Lee</p>

10	T: This is me (<i>points</i>). I am Miss Lee. This is my family. This is my father (<i>points</i>). This is my mother (<i>points</i>). And I have two sisters. They are my sisters (<i>points</i>). This is my sister (<i>points</i>). Her name is Celine. Her name is Celine. This is my sister (<i>points</i>). Her name is Stella. Her name is Stella. This is my father (<i>points</i>). This is my father. He is a man. He. He is my father. His name is Pui. His name is Pui. HIS. His name is Pui.
15	<i>[Then she recaps and reminds pupils of the names and then asks them questions about the names and relationships of her family members. She then asks them to take out their family photos, many of them make comments in Cantonese, presumably excuses/apologies; she tells pupils with no photos to take out their handbooks which have photos in them. She takes one pupil photo as an example].</i>
20	T: Look. Who's this (<i>points</i>)? Who's this? Who's this? This is ... L4: Irene. L5: This is Irene.
	T: Good. This is Irene. Her name is Irene. Okay, this is Irene. <u>LLL</u> : This is Irene.
25	T: Her name is Irene. <u>LLL</u> : Her name is Irene. T: And this one (<i>points</i>), who's this? <i>[Further demonstration and practice]</i>
30	T: Stand up. Stand up. Now I want you to get with [<i>sic</i>] your photo or your handbook [<i>uses gesture</i>]. You can walk around and then look at the others, 'What's this?' and then you can answer, you can answer okay now try, get your book and get your photos ready. [<i>Some get out of their seats</i>] Yes, go around [<i>uses gesture</i>].
35	<i>[Pupils leave their seats and move towards the front of the class]</i> Irene, you can ask Tommy. Or Heidi you can ask Kitty. Okay come out. Come here children. Come here children.
40	<i>[Pupils stand near the front of the class, at first they are led by the teacher to ask the target questions and answer them, but after some initial prompting and encouragement, more independent pupil participation develops. I also join in, which encourages further communication in the target language.]</i>

In the first part of the transcript, students are exposed to comprehensible input in the target language, by means of repetition (lines 2-5), short simple sentences (lines 10-14) and visual support (the enlarged family photo). Students are both attending to English

and making short individual and whole-class responses (e.g. lines 6-8, 21-22) in the target language. The photo seems very attractive to the pupils who appear to appreciate finding out more about the teacher and her family. From the end of the transcript, pupils circulated, asking and answering questions about their own photos, which involved them actively in using the taught language through structured communication.

There are a number of general factors in teacher C's teaching which seem to provide a foundation for TOC teaching. Firstly, as I have shown in chapter 5 she has congruent beliefs with TOC and a sound understanding of TOC principles. Secondly, she is aware of the importance of involving pupils through oral work and activities (5.2.4). Thirdly, the ability of teacher C to provide an English medium environment seems to be a positive factor for facilitating pupils putting language into use through tasks (cf. teacher B above).

6.2.5 Summary and reconciliation

This section has identified a number of prominent general features of the teaching of the three teachers. It has indicated that teachers A and C share some common ideas and practices in terms of pupil motivation, pupil enjoyment and putting language into use through activities. Contrasting features are that teacher A is teaching in a high ability school with a number of boisterous pupils who create discipline problems, whilst teacher C teaches in a below average ability school and is able to balance motivating class-work without suffering serious problems in discipline. Teacher B adopts a mainly transmissive approach and emphasises good classroom behaviour. One prominent feature of her teaching is code-switching from English to Cantonese, which occurs less frequently in the lessons of teachers A and C.

6.3 Extent of implementation

I now move on to discuss directly the extent of implementation of TOC as per RQ 3. Table 6.6 represents the teachers' perception of the degree of TOC implementation in the observed lessons. The letters, A, B or C represent the response of that teacher. In each post-cycle interview, they were asked to place their perception of the extent of implementation on a five point scale via the question, 'Overall, in these lessons, did you think you were teaching according to TOC principles, very much, quite a lot, to a certain extent, not really, not at all'. Respondents gave a direct and unequivocal response to this question except on one occasion where teacher C replied after the second observation cycle 'between a certain extent and quite a lot'; this is represented by ticks in both the categories to which she refers.

Table 6.6 Teacher perceptions of degree of implementation based on interview data

Teacher perception of extent of implementation	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Not at all			
Not really			
To a certain extent	B	B, C	B
Quite a lot	C	C	A, C
Very much	A	A	

The quantitative data outlined in tables 6.7-6.9 below should not be over-interpreted. The lessons that were observed for the study (see 4.5.3) are snapshots of the classroom English teaching carried out by the three teachers. It is not implied that these lessons are indicative of the entire sample of lessons conducted during the academic year in which the research was conducted. The data claims only to state the extent of implementation *as measured by category H of the classroom observation instrument* (see 4.5.4) used for

the study during the lessons which were observed. The application of the observation instrument also involves a degree of judgement and interpretation on the part of the researcher (see discussion in 4.5.5). These important caveats notwithstanding, the degree of implementation across teachers and across the three cycles of observation is presented as follows in tables 6.7-6.9 below. The figures in parentheses indicates the number of lessons observed for each teacher in each cycle. For example, as can be seen in table 6.7, for teacher A in the first cycle of observation, a total of six lessons were observed, with one of them being described by the observation instrument as indicating ‘no evidence of TOC principles’ and so forth.

6.3.1 Implementation for teacher A

As shown in 5.2.2, teacher A has been trained in and states a belief in the principles of communicative approaches and perceives that she has been implementing communicative/activity approaches in the years prior to the current study. When asked in the baseline interview whether she had made changes to her teaching since starting TOC, she replied that changes were “not very great, because before starting TOC, I always use games and activities”. For this teacher, TOC seems not to represent a major change because her pre-existing teaching style is commensurate with the principles of TOC and so a high degree of TOC implementation would be anticipated; category H of the observation data confirms that this is indeed the case. One illustrative quotation concerning the second cycle of lessons is cited to indicate teacher A’s conceptualisation of how she perceives she was implementing TOC:

I think I let pupils have opportunities to use English, use the target language in their lessons and they have the opportunities to interact with each other, to do

something with each other. I think that coincides with TOC principles. (Post-observation interview 2, p.4)

As shown in tables 6.6 and 6.7, both category H of the observation instrument and the teacher indicate that there is a high degree of implementation in these lessons, with only three of the seventeen lessons being rated as having ‘no evidence’ or ‘limited evidence’ of TOC principles.

Table 6.7 Evidence of TOC principles: Teacher A
(Numbers in parentheses indicate numbers of lessons)

Evidence of TOC principles	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
No evidence	17% (1)		
Limited evidence	17% (1)	20% (1)	
Clear evidence	50% (3)		67% (4)
Widespread evidence	17% (1)	80% (4)	33% (2)
Total lessons observed	(6)	(5)	(6)

In cycle 1, the lesson which had ‘no evidence’ of TOC principles was a listening lesson, whereby pupils carried out some traditional gap-filling, multiple choice and word identification exercises using a listening book and a tape. The content and topic was not related to what they were doing in the other lessons. This is not uncommon in English classes in Hong Kong where lessons are sometimes compartmentalised (3.3.3) in terms of ‘General English’, ‘Dictation’, ‘Listening’ and ‘Educational Television’. No other ‘discrete’ lessons of this kind were observed for teacher A. The two lessons in cycles 1 and 2 which showed ‘limited evidence’ both involved presentation, practice and drilling as preparation for communicative activities which were carried out in the next lesson. There seems to be a pattern of increased implementation of TOC over the three cycles. It

is not clear whether or not this does actually indicate a higher degree of TOC implementation as the academic year progresses or is partly a feature of the different topics being covered (cf. 7.3.4). In fact, if we make a comparison between tables 6.6 and 6.7 the teacher herself perceives a lower degree of implementation in the third cycle. Unfortunately, I did not probe this point further.

Overall, from tables 6.6 and 6.7, one can conclude that both the teacher perception and the classroom observation schedule indicate that there is a high degree of TOC implementation in the observed lessons of teacher A.

6.3.2 Implementation for teacher B

As indicated in 5.3.3, teacher B's beliefs in transmitting knowledge, 'lecturing' and her doubts about the benefits of pair and group activities seem not congruent with the implementation of TOC principles. In fact, category H of the observation instrument shows quite a lot of variation between lessons and across cycles, as indicated in table 6.8 below.

Table 6.8 Evidence of TOC principles: Teacher B

Evidence of TOC principles	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
No evidence	40% (2)		33% (2)
Limited evidence	40% (2)	33% (2)	
Clear evidence		66% (4)	66% (4)
Widespread evidence	20% (1)		
Total lessons observed	(5)	(6)	(6)

One factor in this variation appears to be the influence of the topic (see also 7.3.4). For example, in the first cycle (transcript 6.2) where the topic was a picnic and the language structure being taught was, ‘What have you got?’ ‘I’ve got a ...’ the context and the structures prompted a pair-work task whereby pupils described to each other items that they might take on a picnic. This lesson was classified as indicating ‘widespread evidence’ of TOC principles in category H of the observation schedule. Conversely, lesson 3.3 which focused principally on introducing the vocabulary for the text, ‘The Tam family is on the beach’ was relatively input heavy, teacher-centred and traditional, denoting ‘no evidence of TOC principles’. In this case however, it led to task-based learning and ‘clear evidence of TOC principles’ in the following double lesson (see transcripts 7.2 and 7.3).

Teacher B acknowledges that she is only partially implementing TOC as evidenced by her response quoted in table 6.6 when she describes her implementation as being “to a certain extent”. In the interview data, she is generally unable to state clearly what TOC principles she has been implementing. Her answers on these issues tend to be brief and at times a little defensive; attempts to draw out more specific or elaborate responses were somewhat unsuccessful and the interviewer was wary of conducting too much of an ‘inquisition’ (see also 8.7.3). Examples of indirect or evasive responses (or possibly misunderstanding the question) are included in 5.2.2, 5.3.3 and 5.5.2. Also, in her written post-lesson reports (see 4.4.4.6) when asked, “What (if any) TOC elements or principles did you try to put into practice in this lesson?”, her answers are often quite vague. For example, sometimes she refers to the fundamental ways of learning, such as

communicating or inquiring without a clear link to an activity that has been carried out. On other occasions, she lists a TOC target (3.6.2), such as ‘to present information on a given topic, to give opinions using the information’, without any other comment. This suggests that she is not clear (or is unable to articulate) whether she is really implementing TOC and if so, which principle she is carrying out. Overall, teacher B perceives that she is partially implementing TOC, which seems to be confirmed by category H of the observation schedule.

6.3.3 Implementation for teacher C

Table 6.9 below indicates that for teacher C, category H of the classroom observation schedule denotes a mixed degree of implementation of TOC principles. Some lessons show ‘clear evidence of TOC principles’ whilst other lessons show ‘limited’ or ‘no evidence of TOC principles’. There is no clear pattern across cycles and the third cycle shows the least degree of implementation. Some further observations follow.

Table 6.9 Evidence of TOC principles: Teacher C

Evidence of TOC principles	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
No evidence			50% (3)
Limited evidence	83% (5)	20% (1)	
Clear evidence	17% (1)	80% (4)	50% (3)
Widespread evidence			
Total lessons observed	(6)	(5)	(6)

When asked what TOC principles she has implemented in the first post-observation interview, the teacher responds as follows:

I think I can't tell you which principles or which elements [of TOC] I have used, maybe I have just generalised the whole concept and I think basically I am using the concept of TOC but sometimes it's quite natural, just like activity approach. I just, on the whole, basically think I am using the rationale of TOC. (Post-observation interview 1, p.4)

As also indicated in 5.2.4, the reference to “generalising the whole concept” seems to imply an intuitive grasp of TOC, as she appears to perceive that she has internalised the principles of TOC. This perception seems plausible based on her understanding and attitudes presented in 5.2 and 5.3. For the lessons which reveal only limited or no evidence of TOC, the teacher acknowledges that “I am quite traditional when I am busy” i.e. busily trying to catch up with the teaching schedule. She explains that she sometimes has to miss lessons to attend courses, meet visitors or carry out other duties, so she often falls behind the teaching schedule and then may teach some topics in quite a traditional teacher-centred way in order to catch up with the syllabus. This partly explains the three lessons in the third cycle of observation being rated as having no evidence of TOC principles. In this cycle, near the end of the school year, she states that she needs to catch up with the teaching schedule in this way. This conflict between syllabus completion and task-based activities is further discussed in 7.3.2.

For teacher C (unlike teachers A and B) there is something of a discrepancy between category H of the classroom observation schedule (table 6.9) and the teacher's own perceptions (table 6.6), with the latter indicating a higher degree of implementation. This issue was not discussed in the interview data but I would like to speculate on the possible reasons for this discrepancy and acknowledge readily that other interpretations may be equally valid. Teacher C's class are a below average ability P1 class so particularly during the first cycle of observation, the teacher carries out quite a lot of drilling and

practice, in other words pre-task language practice is time-consuming. These somewhat traditional elements seem to be ‘justified’ as pre-task preparation is not in contradiction to TOC principles. For the second cycle, both the topic and the language structures lend themselves well to task-based learning and four out of the five lessons show ‘clear evidence’ of TOC implementation. In the third cycle however, when the topic and the textbook materials (see also 7.3.5) do not lend themselves so obviously to task-based learning and because the teacher is catching up with the syllabus, several lessons show ‘no evidence’ of TOC implementation. Overall, there seems to be some ‘justification’ for those lessons which are less TOC-like and this may contribute to the mismatch between the teacher’s perception and the classroom observation data.

6.4 Summary and reconciliation

From the data presented in 6.3.1-6.3.3 above, I conclude that teacher A is demonstrating the highest degree of implementation of TOC principles. Seven of her observed lessons revealed widespread evidence of TOC principles, seven lessons showed clear evidence and only three showed limited or no evidence. The features of teacher A’s classroom which seem to facilitate TOC implementation are as follows. Firstly, she has been carrying out associated communicative and activity approaches for some years so it is relatively easy for her to adapt to the rationale and practice of TOC. Secondly, she believes strongly that pupils should put into use the language that they are exposed to, this encourages her to carry out task-like TOC activities in her lessons. Thirdly, her pupils are of relatively high ability as opposed to the other two classes, and I suggest that this makes it easier to carry out purposeful task-like activities in that less time needs to be spent on pre-task teaching and drilling of language items (see also 7.3.5). Conversely, for

the other two teachers' classes of lower ability, it seems to be necessary to allocate more time to the presentation and drilling of language items, which may reduce the time available for task-based activities (see also 7.3.5).

For teacher B, there is a mixed degree of TOC implementation. Eight lessons indicated limited or no evidence of TOC principles, eight showed clear evidence of TOC principles and one demonstrated widespread evidence. In the lessons in which there was little evidence of TOC principles, the teaching was mainly teacher-centred, focusing on the presentation, explanation and drilling of language items. Those that showed greater evidence of TOC principles appeared to be when the topic or the textbook clearly lent itself to task-based learning.

For teacher C, there is also a mixed pattern of implementation. Three lessons revealed no evidence of TOC principles, all of these occurred in the third cycle of observation when as the teacher explained she was rushing to catch up with the teaching syllabus and so felt some pressure to teach in a traditional, teacher-centred way. Six lessons indicated limited evidence of TOC principles and eight lessons indicated clear evidence of TOC principles. Like teacher A in terms of beliefs and prior experience, teacher C holds favourable attitudes towards approaches commensurate with TOC. Unlike teacher A she is teaching a class with relatively low ability in English and more preparation needs to be done before pupils can carry out task-like activities. This is exemplified in the first cycle of observation when five relatively traditional lessons in which language items were taught and practised were followed by the activity-based lesson discussed in transcript 6.4.

One might have anticipated an increased implementation of TOC principles during the course of the year, as teachers gained more experience in using TOC and pupils accumulated more linguistic resources which might facilitate task-based learning. A pattern of increased implementation, however, did not seem to occur across the three cycles of observation. One factor may be, as discussed above for teacher C, that it is common in Hong Kong for teachers to have difficulty in completing the teaching schedule (see 3.2.3) and that towards the end of the year, teachers often rush through topics in order to try to complete the syllabus/textbook. Another factor which impacts on the extent of TOC implementation is the topic being covered and how it is treated in the textbook. In other words, certain themes lend themselves more than others to TOC features, such as task-based learning. This issue is further explored in the discussion of factors affecting task-based learning in 7.3.4.

In 2.4.2, I discussed the CBAM framework for identifying levels of use amongst teachers implementing an innovation. Although CBAM procedures were not used in the study, based on the classroom and interview data, the teachers can be tentatively related to the CBAM stages as follows. Teacher A seems to be at level 4B, refinement, as evidenced, for example, by her concerns for pupil response to TOC; she notes tensions between, on the one hand, activities, fluency and pupil enjoyment and, on the other, the need for grammar, accuracy and written English (5.3.2). Teacher B seems to exhibit characteristics of level 3 (mechanical use), level 4A (routine use) and level 4B (refinement). For example, her statement in 7.3.4 about how she is struggling to interpret

the materials relates to the CBAM stage 3; the general pattern of relatively consistent usage across cycles seems to equate to stage 4A; her focus on the learner in reflecting on whether there should be more activities and the extent of pupil involvement during tasks parallels 4B. Teacher C seems to be at level 4B (refinement) in view of her reflections on the pupil response to TOC. For example, in 7.3.8 she raises concerns about the extent of pupil learning during task-based learning and in 7.4.3 she comments on how the gap between stronger and weaker pupils seems to be increasing under TOC.

Overall, there was a general correspondence between the degree of implementation indicated by category H of the classroom observation data and the teacher perception of the degree of implementation, albeit with some exceptions as discussed in 6.3 above. For teacher A, her perception of the degree of implementation was generally in line with the findings from the observation instrument, with the exception of the third cycle. For teacher B, her perception of TOC implementation across the three cycles of observation was 'to a certain extent', which roughly parallels the evidence generated by the classroom observation instrument. For teacher C, there is some mismatch between the observational data and the teacher perception. The reasons for this are unclear but I have made some speculations in 6.3.3 above.

CHAPTER 7. TASK-BASED LEARNING AND CATERING FOR INDIVIDUAL LEARNER DIFFERENCES

7.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses RQ4, What strategies are the teachers using to implement TOC and what is the rationale for these strategies? I examine two major features of TOC, task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences, in order to explore how these concepts were operationalised in the three classrooms under discussion. The justification for focusing on these two features is outlined in 3.6.7. In view of the centrality of these two notions for the classroom implementation of TOC, the chapter contains a detailed discussion of these two areas, rather than a more superficial examination of a larger number of issues, such as the five fundamental ways of learning, targets or TOC assessment.

7.2 Classroom implementation of task-based learning

This sub-section looks at some of the main issues which emerge from the data with respect to the classroom implementation of task-based learning, as defined by TOC. Table 7.1 below indicates the tasks carried out in the three teachers' lessons within the TOC definition of task. Task denotes those classified as medium or high according to category G2 of the observation instrument (3.6.3, 4.5.4.2). I then discuss selected lesson transcripts to illustrate a number of key aspects of task-like activities carried out in their classrooms (7.2). This is followed by a synthesis of some of the emergent themes (7.3). Given the complexities and ambiguities surrounding the TOC definition of task, this section necessitates me making a number of interpretations and judgements about 'tasks'.

With this in mind, I try to provide detailed evidence of my thinking along the lines of an audit trail as defined in 4.3.4. This enables readers to judge for themselves the trustworthiness of interpretations. In addition, peer examinations (4.3.3), whereby two colleagues offered perspectives on the data, were a particular feature of this section as a means to strengthen internal validity.

Table 7.1 Inventory of tasks

Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C
Lesson 1.1 Pair-work task guessing colours; Lesson 1.3 Group-work task guessing colours, similar to 1.1 above; Lesson 1.6 Written task, colouring clown and producing individual written text (transcript 6.1).	Lesson 1.2 Pair-work identifying things that they are going to take on their class picnic (transcript 6.2).	Lesson 1.6 Identifying family members from authentic pupil photos (transcript 6.4).
Lesson 2.1 Guessing game identifying smells, (transcript 7.1); Lesson 2.2 Writing riddles about fruits; Lesson 2.4 Pupils choose two animals they like and circulate to identify classmates who like the same animals; Lesson 2.5 Group-work making a model zoo.	Lesson 2.1 Identifying smells; Lesson 2.3 Writing riddles describing food; Lesson 2.4 Identifying smells (similar to lesson 2.1).	Lesson 2.1 Group-work naming things that can be seen from the classroom window (transcript 7.4); Lesson 2.2 Drawing and describing what they can see (transcript 7.4).
Lesson 3.1 Group competition – making and guessing sounds; Lesson 3.3 Pair-work identifying and expressing likes and dislikes of sounds; Lesson 3.4 Written text about noises that they like or dislike; Lesson 3.5 Pair-work similar to lesson 3.3; Lesson 3.6 Group-work – identifying noises that they like or don't like in two different contexts (cinema and bedroom) – sticking cut outs on to pictures.	Lesson 3.1 Guessing game predicting what colour will result from the mixing of two water colours; Lesson 3.2 Written task with post-task oral report stage, same topic as for lesson 3.1; Lesson 3.4 Pair-work, the Tam family on the beach (transcript 7.2); Lesson 3.5 Group work discussing authentic photos – transcript 7.3.	Lesson 3.4 Completing a story in groups and choosing a suitable title.

7.2.1 Teacher A

As stated in 5.2.2, teacher A emphasises that through tasks, pupils should put language into use for consolidation purposes. To provide an illustration of how she carries this out in practice, I use extracts from one of her lessons in the second cycle of observation (see transcript 7.1 below). For the lesson (for the full transcript, see Appendix 5), she has prepared five plates of fruit, one for each group of pupils. At the beginning of the double lesson (lasting seventy minutes), the pupils bring their stools to sit at the front of the class, near the teacher, (as they did for transcript 6.1). Once the children have all settled down, the lesson begins with some pre-task drilling of the names of fruits. The teacher then introduces a short dialogue, ‘Smell this, is it nice?’. ‘Yes, it is/No it isn’t. What is it? It is a (name of fruit)’ She then proceeds to an activity in which pairs of pupils come to the front to conduct this dialogue using the fruits as per the transcript below.

Lesson Transcript 7.1

Line No.	
1	T: OK ... Who want to be the questioner? OK. Who wants to be the questioner. Smell this ... em ... Matthew ... And then, listen. Who want to be the guesser? Guess the fruit. Guess the fruit ... em ... Steven ... [<i>Background noise</i>] ... Put your hand on your mouth ...
5	LL: [<i>Giggles</i>]
10	T: <i>If you do not sit well, you have to give me your handbook. I will tell your mum. Are you going to be like that? ... sssh ... I will play this again during lunchtime. If you do not behave ... If you do not behave, you will not be able to play it ...</i> You are the questioner. OK. You ask ... [<i>Background noise</i>]
	L1: Smell this. Is it nice? ... What is it?
	L2: Kiwi
	L3: KIWI!

15	<p>T: OK.</p> <p>L4: KIWI?</p> <p>T: OK. Kiwi.</p> <p><u>LLL</u>: Kiwi.</p> <p>T: Say it. It's kiwi.</p> <p><u>LLL</u>: It's kiwi.</p>
20	<p>T: OK. <i>All of you, move back. All of you ...</i> [Pupils move] ... OK ... Who wants to be the questioner? ... OK, Gordon... [Background noise] ... Who wants to be the guesser?</p>

This transcript involves open pair-work (lines 11-12) being carried out at the front of the class facilitated by the teacher (e.g. lines 9 and 13). The discipline problems, which were noted as a common occurrence in teacher A's lessons (6.2.2), are prominent in lines 6-9 where she is obliged to deliver a relatively lengthy warning in Cantonese. (I explore further the tension between carrying out tasks and maintaining discipline in 7.3.6). From the end of transcript 7.1 above, the lesson continues with three more pairs of pupils being invited to carry out this activity at the front of the class, facilitated by the teacher. This open pair-work is a contextualised pre-task, as preparation for the subsequent group task. Later in the lesson, three groups of pupils are given plates of food and carry out the dialogue in their groups, whilst the other two groups do an exercise from their workbooks. After about twelve minutes, the groups exchange roles with the two groups doing the activity and the other three groups doing the exercise. This task has a high degree of contextualisation and purposefulness, as defined by TOC, and was classified as a 'high' task by applying the criteria for G2 of the observation schedule.

As indicated in teacher A's definition of task at the beginning of this sub-section, the pupils are given the opportunity to use the taught language. It should be noted however, that in the classroom some pupils were frequently 'off-task' and a large amount of Cantonese was used during the task. The extent to which pupils are actually carrying out the task becomes an issue and such implementation issues are explored more fully in 7.3.

Towards the end of the double lesson, pupils did a worksheet (see Appendix 8) as a post-task follow-up activity. The worksheet did not have a strong authentic context for language use, nor was there a clear purpose beyond the practice of the relevant language items (cf. 3.6.3). The pupils do, however, have an opportunity to create their own language within the parameters provided by the teacher. Within the limitations of task-based learning with very young learners, following the framework in 3.6.3 and the criteria in G2, Appendix 2, this was characterised as a 'medium' task. The basis for this characterisation is that pupils seem to be using their own 'framework of knowledge and skill' to create a short text of their own and there is a balance between a focus on discrete items (names of fruits, adjectives) and conveying information through their choice of fruits. Although it is expected that most pupils will choose from the fruits discussed in class and will use the vocabulary items suggested, some of the more confident pupils will choose different or less common fruits. For the fruit riddles required by the worksheet, pupils are encouraged to write their own riddles, this permits them to create a small text of their own and, by reading them out to the class, they can be involved in a communicative activity. In sum, the double lesson involved firstly a fruit tasting activity, which seems to engender interest amongst the pupils and bears some relationship with

daily life with respect to eating fruits or tasting new ones. The written worksheet was classified as a medium task, so within the double lesson, there is one medium task and one high task as defined by the criteria in 3.6.3 and Appendix 2, category G2. Overall, in terms of TOC implementation this lesson in which task-based learning was a primary focus, was classified in category H of the observation schedule as showing ‘widespread evidence’ of TOC principles.

7.2.2 Teacher B

As stated in 5.1, teacher B is only partially able to express either the TOC definition of task or a clearly articulated personal interpretation of task. Her identification of tasks from the lesson report forms and interview data was also somewhat problematic in that sometimes she identified as tasks, activities that would usually be defined as exercises in the TOC framework (see 3.6.3). Table 7.1 above indicates that there was only one task in the first cycle of observation but that the incidence of task-based learning increased in the two subsequent cycles.

In teacher B’s classes, a double lesson from the third cycle of observation provides an example of task-based learning with her class. In this lesson, the main context was on the Tam family (a featured family in the textbook), having an outing to a beach. The language focus was ‘Where is Mr Tam (and other family members)?’ What is he/she doing?’. A pair-work activity was introduced as shown in transcript 7.2 below.

Lesson Transcript 7.2

Line No.	
1	T: Now I want you to ... get yourself a partner. For example, <i>find a partner</i> ...

5	<p>You may find the classmate next to you, get yourself a partner, for example, <i>for example you and you [points]...</i> two of you will do the questions <i>I will ask one of them to close his or her book</i>. So she will ask the questions and I will answer the questions. <i>One go first, one asks all the questions and I will answer all the questions. Then switch.</i> I will ask the questions and she will answer the questions. <i>Group one, do it now ... take turns, ask all the questions. But you have to get the right answers.</i> For example, [name] is asking these questions. First she will ask me some questions, I will close my book and she will ask me some questions. <i>I don't close my book. She does.</i> OK?</p>
10	<p>L1: Where are the Tams?</p> <p>T: They are on the beach.</p> <p>L1: Who is?</p> <p>T: Peter is ...</p>
15	<p>T: <i>Go on</i></p> <p>L1: What is he doing?</p> <p>T: She is collecting shells.</p> <p>L1: Where is Mr Chan?</p>
20	<p>T: Tam. Where is MRS Tam?</p> <p>L1: Where is Mrs Tam?</p> <p>T: She is on the ... sitting under an umbrella on the beach.</p> <p>L1: What is Mrs Tam doing?</p>
25	<p>T: Mr Tam, okay. He is ... what?</p> <p><u>LLL</u>: Sailing a boat.</p> <p>L1: What are the boys doing?</p> <p>T: The boys are playing football.</p> <p>L1: What colour is the sun?</p>
30	<p>T: The sun is yellow. Okay, we will take turns and do the questions, I will ask [name] the questions. She will close her book and answer the questions. OK?</p>

35		Ah... What are the boys doing?
	L1:	They are playing football.
	T:	Ah ... What is Jane doing?
	L1:	She is collecting shells.
	T:	Shells.
	L1:	Shells.
	T:	Good. Where is Peter, sorry? Where is Mrs Chan?
	L1:	She is sitting under an umbrella.
	T:	Okay, good thank you. <i>We should give him a hand. [applause]</i>

After this demonstration, pupils are directed to ask and answer questions in a pair-work activity. This closed pair-work practice activity has features of a guided drill whereby the pupils practice the questions and answers based on the textbook. The pair-work involves heavily guided communication and is highly text-book oriented, although the Tam family on the beach does provide some kind of context. On G2 of the classroom observation schedule, this was classified as a medium task on the exercise-task continuum (3.6.3) given that there are both elements of drilling and elements of purposefulness and contextualisation.

This transcript extract further illustrates the use of English-Cantonese code-mixing (e.g. lines 1-10) already discussed in 6.2.3. Another feature is that the teacher retains a somewhat tight control and textbook-bound method of delivery. For example, she carries out the pair-work with another pupil rather than allowing two pupils to do it (line 11 onwards). She also sticks closely to the textbook rather than relating the content to the

pupils own daily lives, for example by asking pupils whether they like collecting shells or whether they like playing football. Later in the same lesson, she does, however, carry out a follow-up activity in which she uses some authentic photos to relate the two questions above to additional situations. The first picture is the teacher in church playing the piano with some other ladies singing, as seen in transcript 7.3 below.

Lesson Transcript 7.3

Line No.	
1	T: OK. So I use the photographs to ask you some questions. I will ask you some questions about the photographs and see that you can answer the questions. OK. Where the photograph is ...OK? The first one.
	<u>LLL</u> : ...
5	T: <i>Yes. You know.</i>
	<u>LL</u> : <i>I can't see the faces/Teacher I can see your face.</i>
	T: <i>Yes, That's me.</i> Yes, that's me. OK? Who is she?
	<u>LLL</u> : This is Mr Tsui.
10	T: Huh? Huh? Mr Tsui? Huh huh? Mr Tsui? <i>What? Mr Tsui? How can that be?</i>
	<u>LLL</u> : [laughter]
	T: She is ...
	<u>LLL</u> : Miss Tsui.
	T: Yes. She is Miss Tsui. Where is she? <i>Wow, you scared me. What is it?</i>
15	<u>LLL</u> : [laughter]
	T: <i>You think I am a man?! Although I am a <u>sin saang</u> [both teacher and man in Chinese], don't call me a man. You scared me.</i> Miss Tsui, <i>not</i> Mr Tsui.
	<u>LLL</u> : [laughter]

20	T: <i>Don't say this again.</i> What is she doing?
	<u>LLL</u> : She/He is ...
	T: Yes. She is what?
	<u>LLL</u> : Playing piano.
25	T: Yes. She is playing piano and ... Ah ... sorry. Where is she? [<i>name</i>] Where is she? Can you guess?
	<u>LLL</u> : She is in the ...
	T: She is in the ...
	<u>LL</u> : Classroom.
	T: Huh? She is ... where is she?
30	L1: <i>Music room.</i>
	T: <i>Music room? Yes. Who told you that?</i>
	L2: House.
	T: House? No. I am not in the home.
	LL: [<i>Background noise</i>].
35	T: Sssh. <i>In fact, this is in a church.</i>
	<u>LLL</u> : Ah.
	L4: She is in the church. <i>Church.</i>
	T: <i>Yes.</i> Church. She is in a church. What is she doing? She is .../
	<u>LLL</u> : /Playing piano!
40	T: She is in the church. OK. Second one ...
	[<i>The class continues looking at another picture</i>]

After further controlled practice, the teacher distributes the photos to the pupils and they discuss in groups the pictures based on the questions that have been taught, namely ‘Who is he/she? What is he/she? What is he/she doing?’ This involves active pupil participation, communicating and inquiring and seems to meet the criteria for a TOC task, context, purpose, process and product. It was thus classified as ‘high’ in category G2 of the observation schedule. The field notes record that the pupils seemed to appreciate the personal touch in the photos and were quite animated (e.g. lines 7, 15, 34) so not surprisingly, there were a number of pupil comments in Cantonese (e.g. lines 7, 30, 34). This lively response was interpreted somewhat negatively by the teacher who reported in her post-lesson report form that “Discipline problems were caused when the teacher showed the photos”. My field notes, on the other hand, describe the activity as being successful because pupils were motivated, involved in the activity, challenged to think and were generating their own English interpretations of the photos. One can observe here what seems to be a tension between the teacher expectation that pupils should remain relatively quiet during lessons, and an activity which seems to be designed to encourage pupils to converse in English in a relatively open-ended way. Perhaps our different perceptions reflect our different cultural expectations of classroom operations (cf. 8.5.1). The teacher expresses her concerns that not all pupils may be on-task during this kind of activity:

Some of them are not doing the activities and it is hard for the teacher to monitor the students to do the activities especially as there are many pupils in the class so I think maybe next time I could ask the group leader to check each of their group members, instead of the teacher checking each student. It is hard to tell whether they actually do the activity or not, especially for pair-work or group-work. (Post-observation interview 3, p.5).

This comment seems to indicate that teacher B has some doubts about providing less controlled activities which allow pupils a certain degree of freedom. This illustrates the tension between good discipline and motivating activities, discussed further in 7.3.6 below. Her desire to maintain control appears to be one of the reasons why task-like activities occur less frequently in her lessons, in comparison with teacher A's classes. As she observes, "sometimes doing the pair-work is quite difficult because of the discipline, they just use the opportunity to talk".

In addition to her desire to maintain a strong disciplinary foundation, two other factors emerge as impacting on the extent of task-based learning in teacher B's classes. Firstly, like many Hong Kong teachers, teacher B perceives a certain amount of pressure to keep up with the teaching schedule/textbook (cf. 3.2.3). She tends to put more emphasis on teacher presentation of the target learning items (see 6.2.3.2), rather than 'learning by doing' as espoused by teachers A and C. Secondly, the topic (see also 7.3.4) being covered impinges on the extent of task-based learning in her classroom. For example, there was more evidence of task-based learning in the second cycle of six lessons, four activities were classified as 'medium' tasks and one as a 'high' task. One of the reasons for this was that the theme of the five senses could naturally be exploited by a number of activities whereby pupils smelt and tasted things, carried out small-scale surveys etc. The teacher herself did not perceive that she was doing anything differently in these lessons in comparison with the first cycle of observation ("basically it was the same"), but believed that the topics she were covering were more interesting for the pupils. The teacher

highlights communication and problem-solving as TOC elements in these lessons (cf. the five fundamental ways of learning in 3.6.6):

I asked students to bring their own food and to ask the other students to guess what they have brought to the class. They need to talk to their classmates and about the problem-solving when I asked the students to taste, ask them to tick the chart and fill in the chart. (Post-observation interview 2, p.4)

Overall, as evidenced in table 7.1, teacher B carries out task-based learning much less frequently than teacher A but somewhat more frequently than teacher C. The main reservations which she expresses about task-based learning seem to be her perception that tasks can lead to discipline problems and that she finds it hard to monitor students adequately during activities.

7.2.3 Teacher C

Table 7.1 indicates that for teacher C, there was much less evidence of task-based learning than for teacher A but slightly less than for teacher B. The latter point presents something of a contradiction in terms of attitudes as evidenced in 5.3, where she showed a more positive orientation towards TOC and task-based learning than teacher B. Some of the reasons for this mismatch in implementation are discussed in 6.3 and I also return to the issue below.

In transcript 6.4, I discussed a task from the first cycle of observation. A further example of teacher C's approach to task-based learning from the second cycle of observation is discussed with respect to transcript 7.4. The theme of this group of lessons was the seeing element of the five senses, with a focus on the language structures, 'What can you

see?’ ‘I can see a ...’. In the first double lesson of the observation cycle, a task was carried out whereby the group leaders of each group of five or six pupils went and looked out of the classroom window. Then the group members asked the leaders, ‘What can you see?’ and the leaders reported what they had observed. In other words, there was a purpose and context as defined by TOC (3.6.3) and pupils seemed to be using a framework of knowledge and skill in order to communicate meaning. This was classified in category G2 of the observation schedule as a ‘high’ task. The teacher expressed satisfaction with this task, “Some of the pupils can really ask and answer the questions during the activity”. Some comments on the implementation of the task with respect to pupil involvement are included in 7.3.8. In the following lesson extract from the second double lesson of this cycle, all pupils gathered around the window to explore and discuss what could be seen.

Lesson Transcript 7.4

Line No.	
1	T: Now, today I want you to look out of your window. Look out of the classroom window and then draw what you see out of the window, OK? So now, this group, come here. Jackson, come here. Stand here. Thomas, come here, OK. Come here. The first group, come here. <i>You can see it from there ... Have you got paper?</i> And this group, come here. Come over here. Go there. Go there. <i>Quiet.</i>
5	OK ... Can anybody tell me, what can you see from the window? Yes?
	L1: I can see a building.
	T: Valerie, can see a building. And you Arthur, what can you see from the window? ... Arthur, what can you see from the window?
10	L2: I can see a people.
	T: Ah ... a what?
	L2: I can see some people.
	T: Good. You can see some people. And you Ken?

15	L3:	I can see a bus stop.
	T:	A bus stop. And you Sarah? What can you see?
	L4:	I can see a bus
	T:	A bus. And you Jackson? Jackson? What can you see?
	L5:	Nothing.
20	T:	No? Nothing? What can you see?
	L6:	Tree.
	T:	Tree. Can you? Car, tell me ... flowers. Tammy?
	L7:	A car.
	L8:	A store.
25	T:	OK. Good. Look at there. Where, can anybody tell me, where are cars? Where are the cars? They are on the ... ? They are on the ... ?
	L9:	Street/ road.
	T:	On the road. Good. Can you see there? There, buses on the road. Can you see there? When you see some people. There, can you see some people? Tree. Can you see the tree? OK. Maggie, what can you see? This is a car.
	L10:	[Inaudible]
	T:	On the road. Good. Stella. What can you see?
30	L11:	[Inaudible]
	T:	A dog. Where is it?
	L16:	[Inaudible]
	T:	On the road. OK. Are you alright?
	R:	[Inaudible] ... English
35	L12:	<i>I don't understand what you are saying.</i>
	T:	[Claps] OK. Good. Remember what you see from the window. Now, go back to your seats. Walk, John. Now. Take out your pencil and coloured pencils.

40	Try to draw what you see from the window. OK? This is a window. From the window, draw what you see from the window. Draw what you see from the window. You draw what you see from the window.
	<u>LL</u> : <i>What do we have to draw? / What do we have to draw?</i>
45	T: If you can see some cars, draw some cars. If you see some buildings, draw some buildings. [Pupils start drawing]

In transcript 7.4, pupils are actively involved in identifying what they can see (e.g. lines 7-26). One notable feature is the large number of different pupils involved in answering questions. After this pre-task oral practice, pupils are assigned (lines 37-42) a drawing activity. From the end of the transcript, pupils make a drawing of what they can see from the classroom window and write some sentences, using the structure 'I can see ...'. After being given enough time to draw the picture and write the sentences, some of the pupils are invited to the front of the class to give an oral report of what they can see. There is context, purpose, process and product (see 3.6.3) so one might conclude that this should be a 'high' task. However, during the drawing stage of the lesson, lasting about twenty minutes, they are drawing rather than using any English language, in other words carrying out a non-verbal exercise, rather than a communicative task, which seems to equate more to a 'low' task as defined in 3.6.3. Not surprisingly, for pupils of this age-group the drawing takes up a lot of their time and interest. The focus on drawing is 'good primary practice' but it does minimise the language task aspects. After the drawing time, the majority of pupils are involved in describing what one can see in the picture through written English. In view of the presence of both 'high' and 'low' aspects of task-based

learning as defined by TOC, this drawing and writing activity was classified as a 'medium' task. The teacher comments on this task as follows:

Writing sentences is a kind of problem-solving, they have to report the real situation that they saw from their windows, also communication even they just have to write, I don't want them to just write and read it by me or by themselves. I get them to read it out for the whole class and so that they can write, read and speak, they can use the four skills and listen to the others. (Post-observation interview 2, p.4)

In the third cycle of observation, only one task was identified on G2 of the classroom observation schedule (table 7.1). This seems to be partly because the cycle took place at the end of the school year when the teacher was teaching in a transmissive way in order to catch up with the syllabus (see discussion in 6.3.3). In the third post-observation interview, she notes a number of elements that made these lessons somewhat less task-based. In fact, she herself identifies the prevalence of exercises over tasks in these lessons. She mentions two reasons why the lessons focus less on task-based learning. Firstly preparation time, "my preparation is not so good" and secondly she had to skip some TOC parts in order to save time. Overall, for teacher C there was some evidence of task-based learning but less evidence than one might have anticipated in view of her positive orientation towards task-based learning.

7.3 Factors affecting the implementation of task-based learning in TOC

Having discussed examples of task-based learning as defined by TOC, I now bring together a number of issues which emerge from the observations of task-based learning in the classroom and the focused discussions in the interview data. Firstly, in 7.3.1-7.3.5 I analyse five themes which impact on the task 'planning' stage. I use the term planning slightly idiosyncratically to refer to those factors which may influence how task-based learning is prepared and developed prior to the actual lesson. In 7.6-7.8, I then examine

three salient issues which occurred during the actual classroom implementation.

7.3.1 Teachers' orientation towards task

Within this sub-category, I include teachers' attitudes towards task-based learning as evidenced in 5.3 and their understanding of task-based learning as discussed in 5.2. These orientations impact on how the teachers approach task-based learning in the classroom. In 5.2.2 teacher A has shown a sound understanding of both the principles and practice of task-based learning, describing tasks as "activities in which pupils use language meaningfully". In 5.2.3, teacher B, on the other hand, was unable to explain clearly what 'task' was and there were some *misconceptions about task-based learning as* evidenced by her lesson report forms and interview data (e.g. 6.3.2). Teacher C showed a generally good understanding about task defining it as "knowledge in use" (5.2.4). Overall, both teachers A and C seemed more positively oriented to task-based learning than teacher B and exhibited a clearer understanding of the nature of tasks. Other factors, as discussed in subsequent sub-sections also impact on the degree of implementation feasible in their classes.

7.3.2 Time available for task-based learning

There appears to be a common perception amongst Hong Kong primary English teachers that there is pressure to complete the syllabus or textbook and this impacts on the time available to carry out activities and tasks (Carless & Gordon, 1997; EC, 1994; 3.2.3). Teacher A makes a number of references to the influence of time. For example in the baseline interview she expresses concerns that, under TOC, there may be a reduction in the time spent on written or grammatically focused activities, stating "what worries us [English teachers in the school] is their written work and the very tight schedule, we

want to let them write more through writing activities but we don't have time". She also refers to the limitation of time to teach the required knowledge and also to carry out enjoyable activities or tasks and cites the opinion of the principal as follows:

My principal thinks that it is not worthwhile to spend so much time on letting pupils enjoy themselves. It is not worthwhile to speak, to listen so much but more time should be spent on reading, writing and most important of all, train their familiarity about grammar. (Summative interview, p.4).

In another example from the second post-observation interview she pinpoints that some activities are quite consuming:

I just followed what the teacher's book suggests, ask them to make the zoo they like [i.e. a group task] but I found that it's quite time-consuming but in the process they do learn other things ... forming the concept of putting the same kinds of animals together ... and also they learn to co-operate. (Post-observation interview 2, p.1)

She also identifies the preoccupation of some of her colleagues in keeping up with the teaching schedule as she explains in the summative interview, "Some of my colleagues, their style is to follow the syllabus, to follow the schedule, not to follow, to chase the syllabus ... there is a limitation that is universal, that is time".

Similarly, teacher B identifies time as a major problem as in the following quotation:

I think the time is a big problem to me because the content of the textbook involves a lot of vocab and structures and many activities are involved, but I don't think that I have enough time to do all of them so I have to select some of them, the important parts to do, the activities. (Post-observation interview 1, p.1)

The classroom observation for teacher B indicated that there appears to be an emphasis on textbook completion and it seems that task-based learning, or what she refers to above as "activities", may be squeezed out in order to permit more time for teacher presentation of textbook vocabulary.

Teacher C also identifies time and syllabus completion as a problematic issue, for example, “if it is not a TOC lesson, I think I can teach much faster if I have to rush for the schedule” and with reference to her colleagues, particularly the more traditional ones, “if it is a normal [i.e. non-TOC] class then they [colleagues] just rush for the schedule”.

Teacher C also refers to parental pressure to complete the textbook:

It costs \$100 to buy a textbook but if you [teachers] don't really need the textbook then why do we [parents] have to buy it? We have bought it already, no matter how difficult it is, teachers have to teach all, that's the way of thinking. Don't use some other materials, even if we [the teachers] copy free of charge for them. They still think that they have bought it already, we must use it. (Post-analysis interview, p.3)

Overall, it seems that a desire to complete the textbook (either because of school, parental, teacher or pupil pressure) is a common feature of ELT in Hong Kong primary schools. Given that the textbooks are only partly task-based (Clark *et al.*, 1999), this feature seems to present some barrier to the implementation of task-based learning in Hong Kong primary schools.

7.3.3 Teacher preparation

A different aspect of time is the workload required to prepare materials and teaching aids for task-based learning. For example, the discussion of transcript 7.1 indicated how teacher A prepared plates of fruit for her class and in the analysis of transcripts 6.4 and 7.3, I described how the teachers took authentic photos to the lessons in order to facilitate oral discussion. In this way, task-based learning may require more thought, imagination and planning than simply following the set text, although the TOC textbooks do contain suggestions for tasks and provide some relevant materials. The impetus for preparing materials for task-based learning may thus come from a suggestion in the teachers' notes

for the textbook or alternatively from the teachers themselves. The three teachers made some points on preparations for task-based learning as discussed below.

Teacher A indicates that for teachers implementing TOC for the first time, there is some additional workload, so suggests it is desirable to plan well in advance and develop collaboration with colleagues:

You have to well-prepare yourself, it's better to prepare before September to know the details about your textbook, the activities of the first term at least, what things you need to prepare or make beforehand, and try to get your colleagues to sit down with you to share the workload together. (Summative interview, p.7)

For the first year of TOC implementation, she and her colleagues found the preparation time "acceptable" but they were concerned that as TOC was implemented in more classes, then they may need more support from other teachers.

Teacher B did not identify preparation time for task-based learning as being a major issue, she tended to stick closely to the textbook and also use the supplementary materials provided by the publisher. Teacher C states that TOC engenders additional preparation time in the following comments:

I really put more effort in preparing my lessons and more things to do and more things to be concerned in the TOC lesson. And the variety of homework, I have to spend more time in preparation, marking the homework or doing some, not really a project, some homework with more varieties. (Post-analysis interview, p.8)

This is not perceived wholly negatively however, as she observes that more time spent on preparation is a good habit for teachers in the following observation:

I think more time should be spent on preparation, this is also advice for myself. Sometimes you can't just wait for the publisher to give us [materials], we have to tailor what we have to teach and to prepare something that suits our students and try to understand our students more. (Summative interview, p.9)

Interestingly, as indicated in 5.4.1, both teacher A and teacher C claim that there are aspects of TOC which actually reduce their workload in that task-like materials are provided for them, whereas in the past they had to prepare the materials entirely themselves. Overall, the provision by the textbook publishers of materials suitable for task-based learning seemed to indicate that preparation time had some impact on the teachers but was not a major problem for the three teachers in the study.

7.3.4 Role of topics and textbook

From the classroom and interview data, there is evidence that the topics or themes covered in the textbook impact on the degree of implementation of task-based learning. Some themes seem to lend themselves more or less readily to task-based activities (see also the summaries of the topics in tables 6.2-6.4). For example, for teacher A the topics for the second cycle on tastes of fruit and identifying and describing animals (as shown in table 6.2) were particularly well-suited to task-based learning and indeed, four of the lessons in that cycle revealed widespread evidence of TOC principles. For teacher B, it is noted in 6.3.2 how the topic influenced the degree of task-based learning. In teacher C's lessons during the second cycle of observation, the target language structure was, 'What can you see?', this structure lends itself reasonably well to tasks whereby pupils describe what they can see in the classroom or at home, through looking out of the window. In contrast, the third cycle of observation which focused on adjectives for describing people or animals, such as 'kind', 'rude', 'fierce', 'afraid', 'tired', and the ways this was presented in the textbook did not lead so obviously to contextualised tasks, although obviously there are ways that the topic could have been modified to facilitate task-based learning.

For teacher A, the evidence does not seem to support the view that materials or topics impact significantly on the extent of task-based learning in her classes. She perceived the topics (as summarised in table 6.3) as all permitting exploitation via task-based learning and this seems to be confirmed by table 7.1. She did note however, that ‘listening lessons’ or ‘reading lessons’, which were sometimes somewhat compartmentalised (see also 6.3.1), were often not conducive to task-based learning. Teacher B refers less specifically to the implementation of tasks but notes that different topics in the textbook can affect the pupil motivation or interest:

I remember that in January I am talking about the plants, maybe the topics are not so interesting, it very depends on the materials and the textbook ... the topic about the juice is more interesting, I think they can easily have an experience in their daily life. For example, when I teach the plants, I don't think they have an interest in plants, talking about the roots and the leaves. It's difficult for the teachers to interpret the material. (Post-observation interview 2, p.2)

It's not clear whether difficulty in “interpreting the material” influences significantly the implementation of task-based learning. Teacher C explains that the reason for the lower degree of implementation in her third cycle of observation is partly due to the materials:

For these lessons, I find that some exercises can't be TOC, because it's quite mechanical and it's really a kind of drilling or exercise and you can't change it to be TOC, you can't change the exercise book [textbook?] therefore just part of it can be TOC. (Post-observation interview 3, p.7)

Overall, although a clear picture did not emerge, there was evidence to indicate that the topic and the textbook had some impact on the extent of task-based learning.

7.3.5 Language proficiency of pupils

Both teachers A and C are positively oriented to task-based learning but as shown in table 7.1, teacher A evidences much greater implementation of tasks. I suggest that one of the reasons for this is because her class are of higher ability. It seems reasonable to suggest

that more able pupils may have a greater capacity for doing tasks for the following three reasons. Firstly, higher ability pupils may be able to carry out a wider range of tasks on different topics. Secondly, they may need less time on pre-task presentation and drilling of language items and may be able to complete assigned tasks more quickly, thereby creating more time for additional tasks, in other words they may have the capacity to complete the syllabus more quickly thereby facilitating the time available for task-based learning (cf. 7.3.2). Teacher interview data to support the argument above, does not emerge strongly, partly because specific questions on this issue were not raised. In the baseline interview, teacher A states that she does “at least two or three tasks in every chapter”, which seems to indicate a large amount of task-based learning for her high ability students. Teacher B emphasises that she needs to spend a lot of time on drilling and presenting language items. Teacher C points out that because of her students relatively low ability, she needs to do a lot of language practice and that her policy of using simple English medium can be quite time-consuming. It is acknowledged that these points provide only implicit rather than explicit support for my interpretation in the first paragraph of this sub-section.

Here I have discussed five themes, identified in the study, which seem to impact on the implementation of task-based learning, particularly at the planning stage. Below I discuss a number of factors which were prominent at the implementation stage.

7.3.6 Discipline challenges

The three teachers all noted some tensions between carrying out tasks or activities and maintaining good discipline. Teacher A seemed to find it difficult to arrange motivating

activities and also retain appropriate discipline as evidenced in 6.2.2 and 7.2.1. She believes strongly in motivating pupils to put language into use and seems willing to tolerate some laxity in noise and discipline standards in order to achieve this. For example, when teacher A was covering a topic of *sounds/noises*, she invited the class to make sounds of things like aeroplanes or birds and not surprisingly this generated quite a lot of boisterousness. This tension also occurs in teacher B's lessons (7.2.2), albeit from a contrasting perspective, in other words whilst teacher A particularly emphasises activities somewhat at the expense of discipline, teacher B tends to emphasise discipline whilst allowing less opportunity for activities. This tends to have the result that teacher B's class is better behaved than teacher A's class but spends less time carrying out tasks. Teacher B expresses some concerns about discipline during pair or group work and whether all students are on-task (see, for example, the quotation in 7.2.2). Teacher C manages to integrate quite successfully good pupil behaviour whilst permitting some freedom in activities or task-based learning. She highlights teacher ability to tolerate noise as being important and specifically identifies this as an area where she believes she has developed as a teacher. She also hints at the tension between the desirability of a quiet classroom and the necessity to tolerate some noise, as she states:

[I am improving in that] I got them to talk more in class and I can bear all kinds of noise that they made. Of course, before that or even now, I always think that you shouldn't make so much noise, even you talk you should talk softer, but I think I can bear it now, much more than before. (Baseline interview, p. 13).

Overall, the classrooms of the three teachers indicate some tension between discipline and the noise generated by certain oral or group tasks.

7.3.7 *Use of mother tongue*

In the classes of all three teachers, it was observable that during activities pupils frequently used Cantonese rather than English. Of course, it is wholly natural that pupils would want to use their mother tongue with their peers in this way. These Cantonese interactions seemed to involve both discussions relevant to the task, in itself probably a useful aspect of the learning process, and irrelevant ones, a normal social function but not promoting English language learning (especially prominent in teacher A's lessons). The extent of use of the mother tongue appeared to relate to the following two dimensions. Firstly, the more linguistically complex and open-ended the task, the more mother tongue seemed to be used. For example, in one of teacher B's lesson (*see transcript 7.3 in 7.2.2*), the pupil discussion of the photos seemed to generate greater use of Cantonese than, for example, the more heavily guided pair-work discussed in 7.2. Secondly, there was some evidence to indicate that pupils' language proficiency seemed to impact on the extent of mother tongue in that in some cases, the higher the language proficiency of pupils, the less Cantonese they used. There was also, however, disconfirming evidence which indicated that for example, in teacher A's class (the one of highest ability) sometimes a lot of Cantonese was used, particularly when the students became over-excited or distracted (cf. discipline problems 6.2.2, 7.3.6). Within both of these two dimensions, it was also observable that there was variation in use of mother tongue/target language between groups of pupils as well as between classes. In other words, even in a less linguistically complex task or irrespective of their language proficiency, some pairs of pupils might use predominantly Cantonese.

The field notes and analysis of transcripts (e.g. 6.2.3) also revealed the use of the mother tongue as impacting both on task-based learning and also more generally on what went on in the classrooms. The use of the mother tongue seemed to serve a number of functions. For example, in teacher A's lessons Cantonese was used for discipline purposes, in teacher B's lessons for clarifying meaning or for humour or to create a sense of group cohesion, whilst in teacher C's lessons the mother tongue was used during individual work to provide additional support for specific pupils (see also 7.4.3). More specific to task-based learning, during pair- or group-work it was unsurprising that young beginner students often resorted to the mother tongue. This feature is often regarded as problematic by teachers who feel frustrated by widespread use of the LI during English lessons (Carless & Gordon, 1997). If the rationale for pair/group work is for pupils to practise using the language, widespread use of the mother tongue may not be congruent with teachers' goals. Overall, mother tongue use was an observable feature occurring during task-based learning but a more comprehensive examination of this issue is beyond the scope of the thesis.

7.3.8 Language production

If one assumes that one of the aims of task-based learning is for pupils to produce English language to undertake the task, the extent of pupil use of English is a factor in the implementation of task-based learning. Or to put it another way, is it problematic if a task is completed without some individual pupils making much use of English? The classroom data seemed to indicate two main aspects of this issue.

Firstly, in some tasks English language production was mainly restricted to certain individuals. For example, in the task discussed in 7.2.3, the group leaders were active in language production but there was a limited role for most of the other pupils. The group leader is very active in meaningful English communication but the other pupils are restricted to the utterance, 'What can you see?' and in practice some of them do not even contribute any English speech at all. The extent of pupil involvement in the task raises the issue of the extent to which task-based learning is taking place successfully. A further example, arises from teacher B's lessons (see table 7.1, lesson 3.1), when she states with reference to a water colours activity, "it is difficult for everyone to participate in the activity, since the activity is basically done by one or two students of the group".

Secondly, there were four tasks in the lessons observed (two for teacher A's class and one for each of the other teachers) which involved a lot of drawing or colouring (e.g. 7.2.3) or other non-linguistic work. For example, in one of teacher A's lessons, (lesson 2.5 as per table 7.1) the pupils were asked to make a zoo by using 'cut-outs' of animals and pasting them on to coloured paper. In the post-observation interview, she had some reservations about the time-consuming nature of the activity although she did feel that there were some additional non-linguistic gains from the activity e.g. conceptualisation of which animals are cognate and the social skill of co-operation during group work. For teacher C's lessons, I discuss in 7.2.3 the time-consuming nature of the drawing stage of a lesson. Whilst, a certain amount of drawing/colouring is accepted as good primary practice, for example, pupils may draw a picture and write a caption about the picture practising

relevant language items, teacher C reflects as follows, “sometimes I find that they enjoy doing those activities but how much did they really learn, I just wonder”.

Overall, there were some activities during the observed lessons in which some pupils seemed to produce drawing, colouring or modeling but no (or virtually no) English language was used either orally or in writing. It seems to be a moot point whether the enjoyable and motivating aspects of drawing and colouring compensate for the limited language production, particularly in the Hong Kong culture where ‘serious learning’ seems to be more valued than enjoyable learning (cf. 8.5.1).

Based on the eight themes discussed in 7.3, I draw out in 8.6.1, some implications and outline a data-driven model of factors impacting on the implementation of task-based learning in Hong Kong primary schools.

7.4 Strategies for catering for individual learner differences

This section describes and discusses a number of strategies used to cater for individual learner differences in the three classrooms under review. The strategies discussed are those which emerged from the summary lesson descriptions (4.8), the field notes and the interview data.

7.4.1 Teacher A's strategies

For teacher A five strategies were identified, pupil response at their own level, more able pupils supporting the less able, supplementary workcards, individual questioning and

grouping. Teacher A carries out a lot of activities, which allow pupils to *respond at their own level*, both in terms of degree of difficulty and quantity of work done. For example, in a lesson which had a language focus on ‘What colour is the X?’, during a picture description question and answer activity, some pupils asked questions using vocabulary items that had just been taught, whilst the more able pupils tried to produce other vocabulary items. One of the more confident pupils tried to produce, ‘What colour is the yacht?’ as an alternative to ‘What colour is the boat?’.

Another strategy employed by teacher A is to organise *more able pupils to help the less able ones*, interestingly she stresses the mutual benefits of this arrangement:

Sometimes I ask the brighter pupils to help the less bright pupils, in this way I am reinforcing the brighter pupils’ knowledge because through teaching the others, they must clearly know what they have learnt in order to teach the others. And for one of my pupils, when he was responsible for teaching a less bright girl, he found that he himself didn’t quite understand something and he asked me to clarify it and it helped him and helped the less bright one, also. (Baseline interview, p. 9)

Teacher A also uses *supplementary workcards*, particularly as a method of providing additional learning activities for the more able pupils:

In our school we have prepared some extra workcards and extra reading articles. There are some things for the brighter ones to do, so the early finishers may ask ‘can we do the workcards?’ Then they go and take the workcards and do it on their own and after that they check the answers at the back and after they did three or five the teacher gives them stickers for encouragement and they like the stickers very much. (Baseline interview, p. 10)

Teacher A often asks *individual questions* to pupils in a principled way, for example, sometimes she will deliberately nominate the less able pupils to answer or present at front of class:

During the guessing game, I asked some pupils to demonstrate first and at that time I looked around the class to find out pupils who are not sure if they understood or not and then I ask him or her to come out; this is one way of catering for individual learner differences. (Post-observation interview 1, p.4)

Her rationale seems to be that if the less able pupils are able to carry out a task, then she can be reasonably confident that the whole class is able to do so. This seems to be a well-thought out strategy and contrasts with one carried out by less experienced or less capable teachers, who tend to call too frequently on their best pupils to answer or demonstrate with the result that the less able pupils are often neglected or left behind. Conversely, teacher A also involves the more able pupils at their own level. For example, in a lesson about smells (see transcript in Appendix 5), she elicited the vocabulary item ‘shoe polish’ from a quiet girl with a native English-speaking parent, on the grounds that she was the only pupil in the class likely to be able to provide this answer.

With respect to *grouping*, the pupils are deployed in five mixed-ability groups with six or seven pupils in each group. Although the groups generally do the same tasks, in the double lesson discussed in 7.2.1, she organised groups to do two different activities. Two of the five groups did a relatively routine exercise from their workbooks, whilst the teacher focused her attention on the other three groups who were carrying out a mingling activity in which they had to circulate and identify someone who had chosen the same favourite animal as them. In the next lesson, the tasks required of the groups were reversed. This strategy seemed to work well and enabled better classroom control and more focused teacher support than would probably have resulted if all groups had done the mingling activity at the same time.

7.4.2 Teacher B's strategies

Teacher B places less emphasis on catering for individual learner differences than teachers A and C. For example, on the basis of the data on participant organisation from Appendix 4 tables 4.2, 4.4 and 4.6, the tallying of the data produces cumulative figures of 9% individual work in teacher B's observed lessons, as opposed to 16% and 21% for teachers A and C respectively. Two strategies are discussed, use of language medium and pupils responding at their own level.

The principal strategy she uses in an attempt to cater for individual pupil differences relates to the choice of *language medium*. She frequently uses a dual language medium (mixed code), characteristically some instructions or explanation in English followed by a summary or elaboration in Cantonese as discussed in 6.2.3. A parallel strategy is with respect to pupil use of Cantonese. She hopes that pupils will be able to respond in English but is tolerant of pupil responses in Cantonese, especially from the less able pupils. As she explains:

If I ask them what the name of the item is then for the less able students if they can't give the English name, I will just allow them to give the Chinese one or do drawings. For more able students they can just say the word in English.
(Baseline interview, p. 9)

Activities where pupils can *respond at a different level* of quality or quantity occur less frequently in teacher B's lessons in comparison with teachers A and C. One example however, of teacher B facilitating pupil response at different levels was when they were preparing for a class picnic. Pupils were invited to bring to class, things that they might take to a picnic (transcript 6.2). In the pair-work activity described in 6.2.3, there was a variety of pupil responses in terms of full sentence or short answers (e.g. omitting 'I've

got'), simple or more complex choice of vocabulary and quantity of sentences generated (one or more than one). Overall, teacher B puts more emphasis on whole-class teaching and class cohesiveness (5.2.3, 6.2.3) rather than individualised learning.

7.4.3 Teacher C's strategies

For teacher C, five strategies were identified from the seventeen summary lesson descriptions (4.8), the field notes and the interview data, namely graded worksheets, individual questioning, extra support during writing activities, language medium and classroom grouping. Teacher C states that she uses *graded worksheets* on the same topic but with varying degrees of support. She explains as follows:

I can make something graded, for example, workcards or worksheets, the same worksheets but a different grading, so they get different designs for the same activity or the same exercise. I think it's good, for example, I've got some worksheets, they've got three levels, they did the same thing, but with different points or clues to help them, so they can still finish the same worksheet but in different ways. (Baseline interview, p. 16)

For example, in the third cycle of observation one lesson involved three graded worksheets with six filling in the blanks items. The weaker pupils had to circle the correct answer from a choice of three answers given, the average pupils were required to fill in the blanks choosing from six words given, the brighter pupils had to fill in the blanks without any given words. The worksheets are designated as 'sun', 'moon' and 'star', in an attempt to avoid labelling of pupils. Although interview data revealed that teacher C was generally enthusiastic about this strategy for catering for individual learner differences, she did express some reservations about the identification of students as brighter or weaker and the negative effect this might have on social relationships in the class. Indeed, during the lesson a pupil inquired in Cantonese whether pupils could choose which worksheet they did and it might be worth considering this strategy as a

means to promote learner self-evaluation and learner independence.

The second strategy identified in teacher C's lessons is to ask a lot of *individual questions* of her pupils. This caters for individual learner differences in that pupils can respond at their own level (e.g. single word or sentence answers, simple or more complex answers) and that they can receive individual feedback on their response (praise/acknowledgement or feedback/correction). Transcript 7.4 in section 7.2.3 has already provided an illustration of involvement of many pupils in response to the question, 'What can you see?'. In the following classroom excerpt from the beginning of a lesson, in addition to whole-class questions inviting choral responses, teacher C also asks a lot of individual questions to the pupils. In a humorous and lively way, she is able to involve pupils in English communication. In the space of a brief oral warm-up routine she is able to elicit choral whole-class responses (lines 10, 12, 14) and eight individual responses (e.g. lines 2, 4, 16-17). It is interesting that in this class, there is something of an individual rather than collective spirit, manifested by them giving different 'yes' or 'no' answers rather than responding monolithically with the same response, as is often observable in the Hong Kong classroom. It is suggested that this has been stimulated by the teacher asking a lot of individual questions and encouraging individual responses.

Lesson Transcript 7.5

Line No.	<i>[Pupils stand up to greet the teacher, they remain standing while she conducts an oral warm-up asking chorally 'how are you today?' 'what is the weather like?' The lesson continues as below]</i>
1	T: How do you come to school today? Dragon ... On foot or by bus. L1: By bus. T: By bus, and Pansy, how do you come to school today? L2: I come to school by bus.
5	T: By bus, good. Monica? L3: By bus. T: By bus, all right, Queenie and you? L4: By bus. T: By bus. Are you lazy today?
10	<u>LLL</u> : Yes/No T: Are you naughty today? <u>LLL</u> : Yes/No. T: Are you happy today? <u>LLL</u> : No/Yes
15	T: OK, listen (<i>claps hands</i>). Which pet do you like? <i>[One pupil calls out the answer 'cats' and three further individual pupils are nominated and provide answers "I like pigs/lions/dogs".]</i> T: Don't stand up! (<i>Pupils sit down</i>).
20	T: Right, very good, now put all your books in your bag <i>[The lesson continues with another activity]</i>

Another strategy employed by Teacher C to cater for learner differences is to provide *additional support during individual writing activities*, which she does when pupils are

carrying out a task or exercise. As she explains:

For written exercises, for those that have lower ability, I have some more prompts and hints for them or I will talk with them in Chinese to help them, but for some brighter students I can just leave them to do it alone. (Post-observation interview, p. 4)

She often spends quite a lot of time supporting less able individual pupils when the others are doing something relatively routine, such as drawing or colouring. In particular, she frequently counsels or teaches individually a boy sitting at the front who has both learning and behavioural difficulties.

Teacher C also caters for individual differences to some extent in her use of *language medium*. She believes very much in the importance of maintaining exclusively English medium during whole class teaching and her own confidence and fluency in the language is a significant factor in helping her to achieve this (Carless, 1998). She does however, often use Chinese when talking individually to pupils, particularly the less able students. She explains her method as follows, “Sometimes I will give the Chinese meaning to the weaker students and maybe Chinese instructions. When they come out and not everybody is listening to me, I can tell them in Chinese”.

Another practical strategy used by teacher C is in *classroom grouping*, the pupils who most need additional support are positioned closest to her in the classroom, “In the first term I try to group those weakest pupils to the front group so that it’s easier for me to teach them and to give some more help to them”. My field notes indicate that sometimes instructions are also given group by group rather than to the whole class so as to permit negotiation of meaning and provide flexibility in the choice of language medium or the amount of Cantonese used (as indicated above it is not the teacher’s practice to use

Cantonese when addressing the whole class). When instructions are given group by group, it was also observable that sometimes additional activities are given to brighter or quicker students. She does however acknowledge the difficulties involved in catering for individual differences through this kind of group-work:

At the beginning, I think this idea is quite good but sometimes it's really difficult for me to cope with these kinds of activities because their difference is too large. Even for those brighter students, they finish the second work, but the others are still doing the first work that I have given to them. I try to give them more and it shows me that the brighter students, they did their work faster and faster so they really improve a lot but for those slow learners, still very slow, so I think under the condition of TOC brighter students become brighter and brighter but the weaker students are still very weak and I am still puzzling about this problem. (Baseline interview, p.17)

7.4.4 Summary of main strategies related to individual learner differences

In this section, I have discussed the strategies which teachers were using to try to cater for the individual learning differences in their classes. The evidence from the 51 lessons observed indicates a variety of strategies for providing individualised learning experiences. Some of these strategies are explicitly designed to tailor learning to pupil individual needs, for example, the design of supplementary workcards (7.4.1) or the use of graded worksheets (7.4.3). These methods tend to require more teacher preparation and may place higher demands on classroom management skills. Other strategies cater for individual learner differences more indirectly, such as the use of individual questioning (7.4.1, 7.4.3) or modifying language input (7.4.3), which place relatively few demands on the teacher in terms of preparation or classroom management. In practice, teachers are most likely to adopt those strategies that best suit their teaching philosophy, their stage of personal professional development and their school and class context. Table 7.2 below summarises in tabular form the teachers' different approaches.

Table 7.2 Summary of approaches related to individual learner differences

Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C
Mainly English medium throughout but Chinese often used for discipline purposes	Mixed code, more English than Chinese	Full English medium (almost exclusively) in whole class teaching; often uses Chinese medium in small-group or individual teaching
Emphasis on individual questioning	Choral responses predominate; little emphasis on individual questioning	Emphasis on individual questioning
Teacher support for weaker pupils; boisterous boys attract teacher attention; more able pupils help less able pupils	Some teacher support for weaker pupils	Clearly focused additional teacher support during writing activities
Use of supplementary workcards	No supplementary or graded worksheets used	Use of graded worksheets
Strong emphasis on opportunities for pupils to respond at own level	Little emphasis on opportunities for pupils to respond at own level	Some emphasis on opportunities for pupils to respond at own level
Some flexible grouping, according to the activity	Did not vary grouping or seating	Grouping – weakest pupils grouped at front

7.5 Summary of chapter

This chapter has focused on the two key elements of TOC in the classroom. Examples of tasks in the three contexts have been discussed and a number of themes impacting on the implementation of task-based learning in TOC have been identified and discussed in 7.3. The implications of these findings are further discussed in 8.6. Strategies for catering for individual learner differences have also been analysed and summarised in table 7.2 above, which indicated that teacher B catered for individual differences less than the other two teachers.

CHAPTER 8. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Scope of chapter

This chapter begins with a short summary and reconciliation of data from chapters 5-7. Then a number of significant issues emerging from the study are discussed. Firstly, some implications on the management of educational change are elaborated. Secondly, the models of educational change, introduced in 2.4, are critiqued in the light of the current study. Thirdly, the cultural appropriateness, for the Hong Kong context, of the TOC initiative is questioned. Fourthly, I use the data on task-based learning (7.2, 7.3) to develop a model of classroom implementation issues in task-based learning. The chapter continues with some reflections on the research methods used in the study and concludes with a short summary.

8.2 Summary and reconciliation of findings from chapters 5-7

The previous three chapters analysed the attitudes, understandings, and perceptions of the three teachers and their implementation of TOC in the classroom. The main characteristics of the teachers are summarised against the key variables discussed in chapters 5-7 in table 8.1 below.

Table 8.1 Summary of characteristics of the teachers

Variables	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C
Training	Teaching certificate, non-graduate	Untrained, in process of training; graduate (Music)	Teaching certificate, B.Ed, M.Ed (in process)
Teaching experience	8 years	2 years	4 years
School	High ability	Average ability	Average or slightly

			below average ability
Attitude towards TOC	Positive	Neutral	Positive
Understanding of TOC	Able to articulate main principles	Only partly able to articulate main principles	Able to articulate main principles
Degree of implementation	Quite high	Mixed	Mixed
Task-based learning	Frequently used	Evident but not widespread	Evident but not widespread
Catering for individual learner differences	Variety of strategies	Limited strategies	Variety of strategies
Cultural orientation	Hong Kong born and bred; perceived as Westernised	Hong Kong born and bred; neither Chinese nor Western characteristics predominant	Hong Kong born and bred; one year residence overseas; neither Chinese nor Western characteristics predominant
Main classroom characteristics	Motivates pupils; preferred role as facilitator; tolerant of discipline problems	Class cohesiveness; preference for orderly classroom; use of mixed code	Pupil motivation and enjoyment.

Teacher A, as shown in 5.2.2 and 5.3.2 is generally positively oriented towards TOC and has a generally sound understanding of its principles. In 6.2.2 and 7.2.1, evidence was provided to indicate that in the classroom she was particularly focused on providing opportunities for pupils to put language into use through activities or tasks. In the classroom, a high degree of implementation was identified, as measured by the classroom observation instrument. There was significant evidence to support the fact that task-based learning, as defined by TOC, and catering for individual learner differences were being implemented.

Teacher B, the least experienced and least trained of the three teachers, appears to be neutral towards TOC. Her stated 'qualitative' opinions are usually quite positively oriented towards TOC, however she does express some more neutral or negative opinions at times (5.3.3), particularly when more probing questions are asked. Furthermore, the 'quantitative' evidence from the attitude scale indicates a comparatively negative orientation towards TOC. In comparison with the wider sample of teachers, she was less positive than the mean in both administrations of the scale (5.3.3). In terms of understanding, teacher B seems still to be evolving in her ability to discuss the principles of TOC. Some of her statements indicate understanding, whilst others indicate misconceptions (5.2.3). In the classroom, teacher B also shows a mixed degree of implementation as measured by the classroom observation schedule. Eight lessons showed no or limited evidence of TOC principles, whilst nine lessons showed clear or widespread evidence of TOC principles (6.3.2).

Teacher C, with the most advanced academic qualifications of the three teachers, is very positive about TOC both in terms of interview data and the attitude scale. On the latter, she was one of the most positive respondents on both administrations of the scale (5.3.4). In terms of understanding, she exhibits a sound understanding of the principles and practice of TOC (5.2.4). In the classroom, teacher C exhibited less implementation of TOC than teacher A but a similar extent of implementation to teacher B as measured by the classroom observation instrument (6.3). Based on her positive attitudes, one might have anticipated a higher degree of implementation for teacher C and some of the reasons

for the comparatively low extent of implementation (low ability of students, syllabus completion) have been discussed in 6.3.3.

It is worth comparing three variables which seem particularly pertinent, namely attitudes, understandings and degree of implementation. There is some correlation between the attitude towards the innovation and the degree of classroom implementation for teachers A and B. Teacher A was more positively disposed to the innovation than teacher B and showed a higher degree of implementation. For teacher C, there was no correlation between positive attitudes and high degree of implementation as noted above and in 6.3.3. Teacher A however, showed a higher degree of implementation than teacher C, despite being somewhat less positive towards TOC as measured by the attitude scale (5.3.5). I would like to discuss some factors which seem to be different in the classes of teachers A and C which may contribute to this finding. Firstly, teacher A's learners are of higher academic ability than teacher C's pupils which may make it more practical to carry out task-based learning with this class (the higher the ability the less pre-task drilling is normally required which may allow more time for task-based activities, see also 7.3.5). Secondly, in the third cycle of observation towards the end of the academic year, teacher C expressed the opinion that she was teaching in a more transmissive fashion in an attempt to catch up with the teaching schedule. Thirdly, teacher A's own expressed philosophy of teaching is for her to be a facilitator and the pupils to be involved in putting language into use. This philosophy matches well with task-based learning in TOC. Fourthly, there is a wide degree of individual differences in English ability in teacher A's class, with two or three students of native-speaker competence, a number who are above average for their age group and a further group who are only of

average ability. Partly as a result of these differences in ability and partly due to the teachers' rather liberal and tolerant teaching style, discipline problems occur quite frequently, with rather widespread inattentiveness during whole-class teaching. These challenges for whole-class teaching may encourage the teacher to provide more individual and small group work and/or more tasks. Overall, there appears to be some class-specific evidence that facilitated a higher degree of implementation for TOC for teacher A as opposed to teacher C.

With respect to attitudes and understandings, there is the correlation which one would predict. Teacher B is less positively inclined towards TOC and has a less developed understanding than the other two teachers (5.2.5). Teachers A and C are both positively inclined towards TOC and have a sounder understanding of TOC (5.2, 5.3).

Comparing understandings and degree of implementation, the evidence indicates for teachers A and B that the greater the understanding, the higher degree of implementation, although the evidence for teacher C does not provide support for this viewpoint. Some implications are discussed with reference to continuity in curriculum change in 8.3.1 below.

8.3 Implications for change

The section draws out some of the implications for change based on the interview data presented in 5.4. Four themes are addressed mirroring parallel or related sub-headings in

5.4, namely continuity and discontinuity, the extent of change, implementation support and practicality.

8.3.1 Continuity and discontinuity

In 3.7.4, I indicated that educational reform in Hong Kong is characterised by a lack of continuity as policy-makers shift from one innovation to another within a short period of time. Under these circumstances, there is a tendency for teachers to make only minimal adjustments and schools rarely develop any commitment to government-sponsored reforms (Morris *et al.*, 1996). For TOC, Morris (1999a) points out that there was a tendency for schools to focus on or appropriate those aspects of TOC closest to their own practices or current school-specific priorities. Applying this point to the three case study teachers, TOC was identified (5.2) as sharing similarities with AA, a relatively low-key reform first introduced in 1975 (3.7.3). Teachers A and C, who had undergone pre-service and/or in-service training during the late 1980s and early 1990s were also both familiar with the theory and practice of communicative approaches on which the syllabus of that time was based. Thus, teacher B, to some extent, and teachers A and C, to a greater extent, were able to make links between TOC and previously adopted approaches. This seemed to facilitate understanding of TOC (5.2) and implementation (6.3).

Task-based learning in TOC could profitably have built upon and been differentiated more explicitly from AA and communicative approaches. This would have served to acknowledge the past experiences of teachers and build understanding from something with which teachers were familiar. I suggest that this might have reduced some of the

confusions about task-based learning which were discussed in 5.2. In fact, AA was not even mentioned in the TOC framework document (Clark *et al.*, 1994), so an opportunity to differentiate TOC from AA was missed. As indicated in 8.2 above, there seemed to be some correlation between understanding and implementation amongst the three case study teachers. A possible repercussion is that by building on pre-existing approaches, one might expect a greater degree of understanding which may lead to a higher degree of implementation.

Additionally, as indicated in 5.4.4, for teachers A and C there was a sense that TOC, through its promotion of task-based learning, legitimised their own preferred practices and shielded them from being criticised *implicitly or explicitly by more traditional-minded colleagues*. Morris (1999b) identifies this aspect as being one of the significant impacts of TOC:

Some teachers claimed that they had been trying to use pedagogies which promoted task-based learning, interaction and group-work prior to the introduction of TOC but had found this difficult to sustain as it was in tension with the established patterns of schooling. The introduction of TOC served to change this scenario. (p.9)

The comments of teachers A and C (5.4.4) are able to provide further confirming evidence of this impact of TOC. By legitimising alternative practices to traditional teaching, TOC provided a catalyst for change and improvement.

On the other hand, the failure to maintain long-term commitment towards TOC (3.8) carries negative implications. Pro-TOC schools regarded the 'delabelling' and withdrawal of explicit support for TOC with a sense of betrayal (Morris, 1999a) in that

their hard work and achievements in developing the new curriculum seem not to be recognised. This reinforces the points made in 3.4 and 3.8, or in Morris' words:

The perception that the government lacks long-term commitment, that new initiatives are symbolic, short-term, transitory gestures in response to changes of the political context and policy personnel, and that inertia or surface changes in schools are the optimal response to policy initiatives. (p.12)

Given that the data for my thesis was collected before the 'delabelling' of TOC, no data from the teachers can be provided to illustrate their views on this issue.

Now as Hong Kong embarks on a further round of educational reform (Education Commission, 2000), Morris (1999a) indicates "it seems that TOC will be recreated and emerge under another name with its key features redefined" (p.6). I believe that teachers are likely to be sceptical about whether a new reform can deliver where previous ones, such as TOC are perceived to have failed. I suggest that if policy-makers want teachers to understand and implement new reform agendas, they need to explicitly indicate the relationship between different reforms, acknowledge what the positive and negative outcomes of previous reforms were and state how the new reform both tackles earlier constraints and adds value. A failure to recognise teachers' past achievements, experiences and challenges is likely to alienate them and/or reduce their commitment towards a new reform agenda.

8.3.2 Extent and pace of change

Discontinuity in educational reform, as discussed above, may lead to perceptions that too much change is being attempted or that timeframes for change are too short. In 2.8.1, I indicated that TOC was regarded as a radical reform. On the basis of 5.4.1, the three

respondents did not really perceive TOC as being a radical change for them personally, although both teachers A and B perceived that for a number of their colleagues TOC represented a major change. Both teachers B and C indicated that change for TOC was too rushed (5.4.2). Teacher C's call for change "bit by bit" echoes the suggestion in the literature for incremental rather than fundamental change (2.3). In a discussion of the difficulties inherent in attempting complex change, Fullan (1991a) suggests that "the answer seems to be to break complex changes into components and implement them in a divisible and/or incremental manner" (p. 72). This seems to be in line with teacher C's suggestion in 5.4.1 that for TOC it is preferable to implement the teaching part before changing the assessment aspects. In other words, from her perspective she would prefer to break up the reform into manageable units which can be implemented sequentially, even if that does not entirely accord with the views of the curriculum developers (3.8).

An example of an attempt at incremental change is elaborated by a school principal, Chua (1998), in her analysis of TOC implementation in her school. First, the school implemented the aspect of TOC with which staff felt most familiar, namely task-based learning, which they interpreted as being similar to AA. Having got encouragement from this, they then went on to tackle 'other more difficult problems' such as TOC assessment. This incremental approach seems to help to make the pace and extent of change more manageable in a similar way to teacher C's suggestion above.

Overall however, it seems to me that the issue of whether a reform can most suitably be tackled holistically or incrementally is a complex one and will usually depend on the

precise nature of the innovation in question and the state of readiness of the teacher implementers.

8.3.3 Practicality

In 2.8.1, I discussed Doyle and Ponder's (1977) framework for teacher perception of the practicality of an innovation. One element of their framework for practicality, that of congruence, can be related to my case study data. It may be recalled that congruence relates to a) the procedures contained in the change proposal and the way the teacher normally conducts classroom activities, paralleling the extent of change as discussed above, b) the setting in which the innovation was developed and that in which it is to be implemented, and c) the role demanded of the teacher by the innovation and the teacher's self-image.

The perspectives of the three teachers in this study on practicality were discussed in 5.4.5. With respect to a) above, there was a varied degree of congruence for the three teachers. For teacher A there seemed to be a high degree of congruence in that she was accustomed to carrying out task-like activities within a communicative approach. Teacher B perceived that there was a high degree of congruence because she had previously been carrying out the activity approach but in actual fact the data indicated that she did not have a strong understanding of TOC and she was only implementing it to a relatively limited extent (5.2.3, 6.3.2). In other words, full TOC implementation was not commensurate with her normal style of conducting classroom activities. Teacher C, like teacher A, has been trained in and claims to have been implementing a communicative

approach so with respect to a) there is a high degree of congruence. For b) above, in terms of the setting in which the innovation was developed, as I indicate in 3.5.3, TOC was mainly developed by expatriate curriculum developers and seems to draw to some extent on Western educational practices (cf. 8.5). With respect to c), the picture is similar to a). The role required by the innovation seems to be congruent with the image of teacher A and C, but less so for teacher B, whose self-image as a teacher seems to represent more of a didactic than a facilitative role (5.3).

Overall, the literature (2.8.1) and the current study seem to indicate that teacher perception of practicality is an important issue in curriculum innovation. In this study, it was not discussed in the interviews how the teachers understood the term 'practicality'. My interpretation from the study and the relevant literature is that in addition to the above Doyle & Ponder definition, the following issues are relevant to a teacher understanding of 'practicality':

- The availability of suitable teaching materials e.g. textbooks
- The manageability of the innovation within the constraints of class sizes, workloads and the school environment
- Or more cynically, 'impractical' may be a term that teachers place on an innovation or aspects of a reform, when they simply do not support it or do not wish to implement it.

8.3.4 *Implementation support*

All changes need support during implementation and this is particularly the case for a challenging reform, such as TOC (3.8). Fullan (1991) points out that the failure to support teachers during implementation is a common pitfall in change. One-off staff development clearly has its limitations (2.8.4), since teachers have their most specific queries and doubts during actual implementation. As teacher C indicates, with reference to TOC, the hope that teachers can begin to carry out a complex innovation after a three-day mass seminar is overoptimistic.

The current study did not aim to provide explicit implementation support but the three teachers perceived some beneficial side effect in terms of my providing a point of contact and potential source of advice during implementation. Whilst I was particularly careful to avoid contaminating the interview data, I was willing to give occasional advice on various topics, for example, English language usage, preparation for speech festivals, information on how other schools were tackling TOC or the informants own further academic studies. The three teachers also commented that the experience of being observed was beneficial in terms of either developing confidence in being observed or in providing a challenge for further improvement. It seemed that my presence served, to some extent, to reduce the teacher isolation frequently identified in the literature (Lortie, 1975; Rosenholz, 1989) and in fact as indicated in 4.3.7, feelings of isolation were one of teacher C's motivations for participating in the study.

The positive implications for teachers of involvement in TOC research are also corroborated by Morris, Lo & Adamson (2000) who found that:

Those teachers that worked in close collaboration with university researchers and other professionals, tended to exhibit more professional development and growth. This is probably because such teachers receive feedback on and endorsement of their work, which helped them to raise their professional consciousness and in turn helped them to improve their analytical awareness. (p.12)

Although the implementation support described in this section is less focused and specific than the coaching and support strategies described in 2.8.4, I believe it has had some positive implications for teachers.

8.4 Critique of change models

In 2.4, I outlined three models of change a fidelity perspective, CBAM and a mutual adaptation approach. This sub-section aims to reflect on the usefulness of these models in shedding light on the current study.

With a complex innovation, such as TOC, it is hard to envisage that a true fidelity perspective can be achieved. It is highly unlikely that any teacher can absorb all of the multi-faceted principles of TOC and implement them faithfully (however that is defined) in the classroom. Indeed, the three teachers in the study clearly had different perceptions of TOC as I showed in chapter 5 and different strategies for implementation as I demonstrated in chapters 6 and 7. It is not clear whether a fidelity perspective would even be desirable. In fact, the project leader had the view that TOC should be a framework to be adapted and used by teachers in the light of their own contextual requirements (Clark, 1994; 3.8). ED seemed to have a different viewpoint, one more oriented to a fidelity orientation or as Morris (1999a) points out, ED's conception focused

more on creating a standard curriculum product that was to be provided to schools for implementation. The fidelity perspective influenced RQ 3 on the degree of implementation. As indicated in 2.4.2 however, fidelity approaches are acknowledged to be relatively ineffective at probing innovations which are large-scale, complex and radical, as was the case for TOC. Overall, it seems that fidelity models do not adequately cater for the complexities of both the ideas contained in the innovation and the chaotic nature of the change process itself.

CBAM seems to be a model which is more directly applicable to this thesis in that it focuses on the concerns of the implementing teachers during innovation. Strengths of CBAM are that it explicitly acknowledges change as a process and focuses on how teachers develop in response to an innovation. As Anderson (1997) however, points out, individual data are rarely produced in CBAM studies and this means that variable patterns of change between teachers are lost when numerical data from the Levels of Use framework (2.4.2) are conflated into mean scores. Such an emphasis on the quantitative or numerical data enables generalisations to be made but neglects the more finely grained qualitative data, as presented in this thesis. It is my contention that such qualitative data represents more accurately the nature of the processes of educational change. A further drawback of CBAM is that it presents the innovation itself as unproblematic (Morris, personal communication, 7/9/2000) with its focus on how the teachers are responding rather than on the more interactive nature of the mutual adaptation model.

With respect to mutual adaptation, as indicated in 5.2.1, the interpretation of innovations seems to involve an interface between the views of the curriculum developers and those of the implementing teachers. As such, reforms involve teachers adapting and personalising ideas. TOC was modified in the period from around April 1993 (postponement, 3.7.1) to September 1995 (early adoption) in response to comments from academics and school personnel (3.7.2, 3.8). To some extent, these adjustments can be described as mutual in that there was some form of compromise and negotiation between both change agents and the implementers. It should be pointed out, however, that a phase of adaptation of the innovation was not planned in advance but arose in an ad hoc way, involving “a process of redefinition as the government responded to highly critical reaction” (Morris, 1999b, p.2). In the period from September 1995 onwards, i.e. including the period of this research, it seems that the teachers adapted the innovation, often in line with their previous practices, such as AA for all three teachers or communicative approaches for teachers A and C (8.3.1). There is little direct sense of ‘mutuality’ or reciprocity, during this part of implementation as the adaptation appears to be largely one-way. Or as Morris (1999a) indicates, TOC was actively promoted by the government but it was left to the schools to resolve any tensions which emerged during implementation. On the basis of the current study, I find the term ‘mutual’ somewhat problematic in that at some stages adaptation may be ‘one-way’ rather than reciprocal and at times it seems difficult to judge the extent to which an adaptation can be said to be mutual. In addition, as indicated in 2.4.1, in practice adaptation seems to be a political trade-off in response to resistance rather than a plan that is intentionally built in to the curriculum development process.

Overall, these kinds of models of change, are relatively limited in their capacity for illuminating the data from the study. As discussed in 2.4.2, models tend to be unable to capture the complexities of change and more process-oriented approaches seem more feasible as explanatory tools.

8.5 Implications on cultural appropriateness

This sub-section draws on the discussion of the *cultural orientations of the three teachers* (5.5) in order to discuss implications on the appropriacy of TOC for the Hong Kong context. Based on Carless (1999c), it contrasts a number of key features of TOC with the cultural underpinnings of education in Hong Kong.

8.5.1 The roles of teachers and learners / task-based learning

The captioned issues are discussed together on the grounds that the preferred role of the teacher in Hong Kong as a transmitter of knowledge (3.3) conflicts with the TOC notion of teachers as facilitators of pupil learning through tasks. How do the teacher functions required by TOC relate to the existing educational norms in Hong Kong? How do the three teachers in the study perceive their roles as teachers and how do these equate with the prevailing cultural norms?

In 5.4, I quote teacher A's reservations with a form of instruction which involves a lot of teacher talk. Teacher B in this study appears to be an example of this kind of a transmissive orientation, whereby the role of the teacher is to impart knowledge to the pupils. Teacher B, in contrast to teacher A, feels quite comfortable in 'lecturing' or

transmitting information to the pupils. She states that one of the main roles for her pupils in her lessons is to “listen to lectures”, by which I infer she means teacher presentation of material. Biggs (1996a) indicates that the role of the teacher involves both transmitting knowledge and being a respected elder and moral guardian. As such, a teacher may be imbued with authority but not authoritarianism as warm personal relationships are frequently built up between teachers and students. There is an echo here of teacher B’s relationships with her pupils where she demands high standards of behaviour but also appears to have close relationships with the pupils as English teacher, Chinese teacher and class teacher (6.2.3).

Another relevant dimension is introduced by Cheng & Wong (1996) who indicate that education is not only about learning but also about the training of character and developing conscientiousness and altruism. In a critique of TOC from a moral and value system perspective, Wong (1994) opines that it is dangerous and irresponsible if educators are only concerned with teaching methods but neglect the role-modeling function in the learning process. The importance of discipline in East Asian cultures is also emphasised by Cheng & Wong (*op cit*):

Discipline is seen as a necessary part and indeed the fundamental part of moral education, because it trains compliance to collective norms. It is not a mere training for obedience as suspected by many observers from the West, nor a pragmatic means to keep classroom order. (p.39)

For this study, the potential conflict between good discipline and the noise generated by task-based learning is discussed in 7.3.5. In addition, given the emphasis on diligence and effort (Stevenson & Lee, 1996) in CHCs, intrinsically motivating activities, such as games, may be perceived as frivolous and not to be taken seriously. Both students and

teachers may thereby underestimate the role of activities in providing an opportunity for learning, and this can be seen in a number of teacher B's comments in chapters 5 and 6. Contrastingly, teacher A believes strongly in learning through play but acknowledges that this is an aspect of her teaching not universally shared by her school colleagues and a characteristic which invokes more Western than Chinese influences.

Overall, one can identify a tension between on the one hand, a role of teacher as facilitator of task-based learning with attendant noise and potential indiscipline, and on the other, traditional views of learning as involving the transmission of information, moral education, discipline and diligence. This issue is revisited in 8.6.3.

8.5.2 Individual differences

Classroom data relating to catering for individual differences are discussed in 7.4. How culturally appropriate is the notion of individual differences for the Hong Kong context? In the traditional Hong Kong classroom catering for individual learner differences has not been emphasised to any great extent (3.2.3). Cheng & Wong (1996) state, "Individualised teaching, where teachers work towards diverse targets at different paces, is almost inconceivable in East Asian societies" (p.44). In traditional Chinese culture, there is however a belief in individual self-development, albeit so as to contribute to the common good (Lau, 1979). As Cheng (1998) points out, "In the West, the ultimate aim of education is to develop fully the potential capacity of individuals. In East Asia, the ultimate aim of education is to cultivate a person so that he or she can and will contribute to the society" (p.25).

There is some evidence however, that there are Chinese cultural traditions supporting individualisation in teaching and learning. The influential philosopher and scholar, Confucius adjusted his teaching methods according to the individual capacities and personalities of his students (Chen, 1993), for example, “Ch’iu holds himself back. It is for this reason that I urge him on. Yu has the energy of two men. It is for this reason that I tried to hold him back” (Lau, 1979, p.109).

Although I perceive that there are potential cultural barriers to catering for individual learner differences, I should point out that the three teachers for the study did not express any cultural inappropriacy in the concept of individual differences even when questioned closely on the subject. Their reservations about catering for individual learner differences were confined to the difficulties of individualised learning when faced with large class sizes and limited time and resources.

8.5.3 Assessment

In 3.2.3, I noted the examination-oriented nature of schooling in Hong Kong. There are long-standing cultural traditions supporting the importance of competitive examinations in Chinese societies (Murphy & Liu, 1998). Lee, W.O. (1996) observes, “the belief in the possibility of upward social mobility through educational success was important and became a significant driving force for many ordinary people to study hard for a better future” (p.38). This comment is also very much applicable to the modern Hong Kong where parents are highly ambitious (for themselves or their offspring) with exam success

the route to upward mobility, material rewards, foreign passports or all three (Tang & Biggs, 1996; 3.2.3). The Sheng Kung Hui primary school principals association (1994), in a critique of TOC assessment, also extols the merits of competitive schooling, in that comparisons between students allow the learners to find out where they stand and provide a basis for improvement and learning from more able peers. Teacher A expressed a similar perception that parents like to know the ranking position of their children and how they compare with other classmates (5.5.1).

The TOC framework attempts to overthrow these societal views of competitive examination elements by proposing a paradigm shift from *summative to formative*, and from norm-referenced to criterion-referenced assessment (Clark *et al.*, 1994; Morris *et al.*, 1999). The educational reasons for such a change seem to be sound, in short, moves towards process rather than product, co-operation rather than competition, assessment for learning rather than for testing/accountability (Carless, 1999c). However, as indicated above, the shift seems not to be commensurate with the prevailing attitudes and beliefs of parents, principals or teachers (Morris *et al.*, 1999). The Hong Kong value orientation on meritocracy and a 'level playing field', tends to lead to educational emphases on the quantitative, the objective and in testing terms reliability, often at the expense of validity (Biggs, 1996c). In this respect, teachers and the general public seem to be suspicious of test items that require professional judgement or extended answers, branding them as 'too subjective', whilst favouring those forms of assessment which are "objective, reliable, formal and non-subjective", (Morris *et al.*, 1999, p.47) e.g. multiple choice items. Parents did not seem to understand or favour TOC assessment principles, preferring

instead conventional reporting systems which used ranks and marks (Morris *et al.*, 1999). Overall, as Morris *et al.*, (1999) point out, while schools were supportive of the rhetoric and goals of the types of TOC assessment, they were “unwilling to abandon long-established and prevailing systems of assessment” (p.22). The three teachers in the study, however, did not strongly emphasise these socio-cultural aspects of assessment. Instead, their main concern about TOC assessment was the workload aspects of the recording and reporting process. Nonetheless, in my opinion as argued above, there is evidence to suggest that the assessment concepts underlying TOC are at odds with the views of assessment generally prevalent in Hong Kong society.

8.6 Implications for task-based learning

This section builds on the data presented in 7.2 and 7.3, by drawing out some implications for task-based learning. In 7.2, I provided examples of how tasks were being carried out in the three classrooms under discussion. I identified in 7.3 a number of issues which particularly impacted on the extent of task-based learning being carried out. I now wish to extend this analysis by critiquing an existing model of task-based learning for TOC (3.6.3) and proposing an alternative one which includes ‘planning elements’ (7.3.1-5) and ‘implementation issues’ (7.3.6-8), foregrounded by the data in the previous chapter.

8.6.1 A model of classroom implementation issues in task-based learning

In 3.6.3, I described a model developed by Morris *et al.*, (1996) to distinguish between exercises and tasks in TOC. The model aims to facilitate the identification of the extent to which task-based learning occurs, but is not specific to ELT. Like all models, it is somewhat idealised and may or may not reflect what actually occurs in reality. It

classifies tasks as high, medium or low based on the degree of purposefulness and contextualisation of a task. The model influenced the classroom observation schedule (4.5.4.2) and seems particularly useful in terms of analysing the design of a task or the task characteristics, although it does not have anything to say about the process of implementation of the task and in the classroom (and there is no indication that this was ever intended). Below, I attempt to extend the Morris model further by building on the data presented in 7.2 and 7.3. Stage 1 of figure 8.2 shows the issues which affect the planning of a task, outlining five areas which impact on what kind of tasks will be carried out and the frequency of their occurrence. It encompasses teacher factors, syllabus/materials factors and pupil factors. Five issues which have been foregrounded earlier in the thesis are discussed, teacher attitudes (5.3), teacher understandings (5.2), time available (7.3.2), textbook or teacher generated materials (7.3.3, 7.3.4) and language proficiency of students (7.3.5). It is not claimed that these are the only issues which may arise, but they represent the ones which have emerged from the current study. The interplay between these five factors results in the design of an activity as per stage 2 in figure 8.2. For example, teacher A believes in the value of tasks, has a sound understanding of task-based learning and teaches high ability pupils. There was a higher incidence of contextualised and purposeful tasks in her lessons than for the other two teachers whose profiles are somewhat less conducive to task-based learning. Stage 3 of figure 8.2 builds on the two previous stages by indicating the three main issues which emerged from the study in terms of classroom implementation of the tasks. These arise directly from the classroom data in 7.3.6, 7.3.7 and 7.3.8.

Figure 8.2 Data driven model of factors impacting on the implementation of task-based learning in Hong Kong primary schools

Stage 1 - Task planning issues

Teacher beliefs. To what extent does the teacher believe in the benefits of task-based learning? (5.3, 7.3.1)	Teacher understanding. To what extent does the teacher understand task-based learning? (5.2, 7.3.1)	Time available. To what extent does the teacher perceive that she has the syllabus time to carry out tasks? (7.3.2)	Resourcing. To what extent is there suitable resourcing for task-based learning, in terms of textbook and/or teacher prepared materials? (7.3.3, 7.3.4)	Language proficiency of students. To what extent do students have sufficient linguistic resources to carry out tasks? (7.3.5)
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Stage 2 - Task characteristics

To what extent does the task contain the key task characteristics specified by the TOC framework, i.e. purposefulness and contextualisation? (cf. 3.6.3)



Stage 3 - Classroom implementation issues

Discipline problems To what extent are pupils on-task? (7.3.6)	Use of mother tongue To what extent are they using English to carry out the task? (7.3.7)	Target language production What is the balance between a) language vs. drawing, colouring or modeling and b) all pupils vs. limited pupil involvement? (7.3.8)
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8.7 Reflection on research methods

The research design, as discussed in chapter 4, used case study as its approach and employed classroom observation, interviews and an attitude scale as its methods. This sub-section analyses various aspects of the research methods in the light of having carried out the study.

8.7.1 Classroom observation

With respect to classroom observation, in 2.7.1 and 4.5.3 I highlighted a dearth of research on the classroom implementation of innovations. One of the strengths of the current study is that it provides data on how an innovation was actually carried out in the classroom. A further strength is that classes were observed during the course of a week and across different cycles of observation (see 4.5.3). This reduces the possibility of observing one-off lessons which may be different from the teachers' normal practice and, via the longitudinal aspects enhances the validity of the study (see 4.5.5). One of the challenges presented by the classroom observation was that it generated a lot of data which needed to be reduced and summarised as discussed in 4.5.6. For example, the need for selectivity in the choice of lessons for transcription (4.5.4.5) was an issue for the internal validity of the study (4.2.3 and 4.5.5).

With respect to the classroom observation schedule (4.5.3 and 4.5.4), one of its strengths was that it permitted the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data (but see also 8.7.6). The schedule proved itself to be practicable and user-friendly for the purpose for which it was designed. The unit of analysis of time (4.5.4.1) of four minute intervals

facilitated the collection of classroom data which contributed to the picture of TOC implementation. Its limitations included the arbitrary choice of time unit and the lack of the sophistication of more complex schedules, such as COLT (4.5.2). Due to the eventual emphasis in qualitative data over quantitative data, much of the quantitative classroom data has not been reported or discussed in detail in the thesis (4.5.6, 8.7.6).

8.7.2 Impact of observer

One issue which needs to be addressed in this section is the extent to which the lessons that were observed were typical of each teacher's normal lessons and the extent to which the presence of an observer had an impact on what was going on in the classroom i.e. the phenomenon of observer paradox (Labov, 1972). At the outset of the research, I particularly emphasised to the teachers that I wanted to observe 'real' lessons not artificial teacher demonstration lessons. In addition, the research design of observing five or six lessons over a period of around one week was adopted to minimise the possibility of one-off display lessons. The risk of observer paradox did however, remain real and there is considerable anecdotal evidence that Hong Kong teachers modify their classroom behaviour when being observed. Each post-lesson interview devoted a series of questions to my perceived impact on both pupil and teacher behaviours. Teacher A perceived that her lessons were essentially the same when I was observing. She identified only two relatively minor differences occasioned by my presence. One related to pupil behaviour which she perceived as generally better in the first lesson of an observation cycle but reverting to normal once they became more accustomed to my presence. The other slight difference was with respect to her use of language medium, "if

you are here I use a little bit more English but if you are not here, maybe I supplement with a little bit more Chinese, especially when I am scolding them”. She also expressed the feeling that perhaps she was a little less tolerant of discipline problems when I was there:

Sometimes they behaved badly and it seems I couldn’t tolerate them and I scold them a bit more ... maybe when somebody is there I expected myself to control them well but they didn’t fulfil my expectation so maybe I felt a bit losing face, something like that then I started to scold them. (Summative interview, p.8)

Naturally, she wants things to go well when being observed, so when discipline problems occur in my presence, she seems more likely to scold the pupils.

Similarly, teacher B perceived that her lessons were similar whether I was there or not. She mentioned that the main impact of my presence was to make things slightly less flexible in terms of timing. This is because she is their class teacher and also their Chinese teacher so if I am not there she can swop time between Chinese and English subjects more easily rather than sticking rigidly to thirty five minutes per lesson. It is possible that my professional relationship (4.3.9) may have made teacher B more guarded in her responses in comparison with the other respondents. It is also possible (although very difficult to verify) that, at times, she may have responded in ways that she perceives me of approving. In addition to my researcher role, I was also responsible for course observations of her teaching (4.3.9) and I felt a professional obligation to provide her some feedback on her teaching after the interview data for a cycle had been completed. There is some possibility that the lecturer – student relationship between teacher B and myself may have contaminated the data to some extent.

Teacher C consistently stated that she taught in the same way whether I was there or not. She did mention that sometimes she would swop lessons to facilitate my visits. For example, on two occasions when she was scheduled to have one lesson in the early afternoon and one very late in the afternoon, on her own initiative she exchanged lessons with another teacher so as to avoid me having to wait in the school for the whole afternoon.

Overall, according to the teacher perceptions my presence did not prompt major differences to their teaching. My own perceptions supported this viewpoint in that I noticed a number of differences between these research-focused lesson observations and the supervision observations for both formative and evaluative purposes which I carry out in my normal teacher education duties. Firstly, the lessons for this research showed less evidence of very detailed preparation, for example, less use of visual aids or sentence strips which are frequently over-used during ‘announced’ teaching practice visits (English Department teaching practice committee, HKIEd, 2000). For teacher B’s lessons, in particular, there was less reticence about the use of Cantonese than there normally is during teaching practice visits. Teacher C also confided to me five minutes before one lesson that she was not available to talk to me because she had not yet completed her preparation for the lesson, hardly the reaction of someone who had planned a ‘display lesson’. Reactions from teacher A were similar whenever I arrived a few minutes in advance of the lessons. My professional judgement based on seven years of observation in Hong Kong primary schools, totalling more than 200 lesson

observations was that unlike one-off teaching supervision visits, the lessons observed for this study represented typical samples of the teaching of the three participants.

8.7.3 Interviews

My reflection is that the interview data was particularly useful in illuminating the phenomenon of TOC implementation. The interviews enabled teachers to provide their own perspective on TOC implementation and could be cross-validated with the classroom observation data. I believe the insights emerging from the interview data are one of the strengths of the study. As such, extracts from the interviews are a prominent feature of chapters 5-7. I judge the quality of insights from teachers A and C to be consistently pertinent and relevant to the focus of the study. Teacher B however, seemed at times somewhat unwilling to speak frankly or elaborate on the points which she was making. At times, she also did not give a direct response to the question posed. It is not clear whether she was being genuinely evasive or did not fully understand the question or for her own reasons choose to make oblique responses or in fact, had no particular opinion on the question asked.

As for my own interviewing skills, during analysis of the interview transcripts there were occasions when I missed opportunities for follow-up questions or additional probes. Evidence from the transcripts seems to indicate that my ability to probe and react skilfully improved during the conduct of the study. One constraint on probing was that I needed to be mindful of not being too inquisitorial and so jeopardising the rapport (4.6.2) between myself and the informants. Secondly, I needed to consider the limitations of

time and the workloads of the teachers involved so that interviews could not be too lengthy.

An additional point of interest in the interviews for the study was the sixth and final interview for each informant, namely the post-analysis interview. These interviews were carried out approximately two years after the completion of the classroom observation data, once the data description, transcription, summaries and analysis had been almost completed. It is suggested that this retrospective interviewing has not been commonly seen in the literature and makes a contribution to methodology in terms of a procedure for the validation of findings.

8.7.4 Attitude scale

As a reflection on the use of the attitude scale, there appeared to be two particular advantages to using an attitude scale in the study. Firstly, it provided quantitative data to supplement the qualitative interview data. Secondly, it provided data from a wider sample to enable the case teachers to be compared with a larger samples of teachers. When the picture emerging from the qualitative data was somewhat ambiguous, for example, with respect to teacher B's attitudes towards TOC, the attitude scale data played a useful clarificatory role. In this way, the quantitative data provided a very useful complementarity and triangulation function (4.2).

8.7.5 Case study research

As discussed in 4.3, a case study approach was used in order to facilitate an in-depth analysis of a small sample of three teachers. Alternatively, a larger number of cases could have been studied, although this would have necessitated some sacrifice in the depth of data collection. Analysing additional cases would have necessitated a reduction in the number of lessons observed which may not have been desirable. In fact, the third cycle of observation served mainly to confirm and provide further support for findings emerging in the first two cycles rather than generating significant new insights. This confirmation function is in itself particularly useful for the validation of findings. It also relates to the longitudinal aspects of the study, which are worth reviewing. The main data collection for the study was concentrated over a seven month period within one academic year. This enabled me to see different topics being tackled by the teachers and also to gauge the extent of change (if any) amongst the teachers and pupils during the year. Extending the longitudinal timeframe to the subsequent academic year would not have been feasible owing to the difficulty in predicting manpower and timetabling issues for a future year.

8.7.6 Quantitative and qualitative data

The design of the study sought to use both quantitative and qualitative data so as to facilitate a full, complementary and triangulated picture of TOC implementation in the case study classes (4.1.1). In practice, this generated a mass of classroom data (see also 4.5.6) which could be analysed quantitatively, qualitatively or through a mixture of both methods. Within the word count allocated for a doctoral thesis, it was not possible to

report all of the data that had been collected. In my first conference presentation of data from the study in April 1997, (Carless, 1997b) I devoted approximately equal attention to quantitative and qualitative aspects. The feedback from the audience and my own subsequent reflections raised some concerns in my mind about the crudeness and loss of detail involved in quantifying aspects of what goes on in the classroom. During the course of writing this thesis, I became more convinced of the trustworthiness of the qualitative data as opposed to the quantitative, hence the eventual emphasis on the qualitative aspects. The quantitative data do however, remain available for further analysis and samples are included in Appendices 3 and 4.

These reservations about the quantitative data were also part of a development on my part towards the qualitative paradigm. At the outset of the study, I was an apprentice researcher with no fixed affiliation towards the either research paradigm. During the course of the study, I perceived that I had developed into a qualitative researcher. An additional comment of relevance to these reflections on quantitative and qualitative research concerns the desirability of mixed method research. The argument for mixed method research was put forward in 4.2. Dimmock (personal communication, 26/5/1999) argues however, that one of the main problems for mixed method theses is that doctoral students are rarely able to develop a high degree of expertise in both qualitative and quantitative methods. In line with the comments in the previous paragraph, I immersed myself more fully in the theory and practice of the qualitative paradigm. Given these comments, the thesis has developed into a 'qualitative thesis'.

8.8 Summary of chapter

This chapter begun by reconciling the data from the previous three chapters. It has analysed a number of themes in the management of change: providing insights into continuity and discontinuity in innovation; the extent and pace of change; notions of perceived practicality; and implementation support for reforms. The change models introduced in 2.4 have been critiqued. The chapter has also discussed *the cultural* appropriacy of TOC for the Hong Kong context and extended the analysis of classroom implementation issues in task-based learning via figure 8.1. Finally, it contains a reflective analysis of the research methods used in the study.

CHAPTER 9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Scope of chapter

This final chapter sets out the main conclusions drawn from the study. Firstly, I summarise the data from the study with respect to the research questions. Secondly, I apply some of the main factors affecting the implementation of curriculum innovations to the three case study contexts. Then I outline the significance of the study. The two final sections outline, respectively, the main limitations of the study and some suggestions for further research.

9.2 Perspectives on research questions

This section summarises the perspectives on the research questions:

RQ1 What are the teachers' general attitudes towards English teaching and learning and specific attitudes towards TOC? As shown in 5.3, teachers A and C favoured activity and communicative approaches to teaching commensurate with TOC. Teacher B held mainly traditional views on teaching, although she also claimed to be carrying out AA. Teachers A and C were positively oriented towards TOC, whilst teacher B was neutral towards TOC (5.3.5).

RQ2 To what extent do the teachers understand TOC principles? As shown in 5.2, teachers A and C had a good understanding of the principles of TOC and its classroom applications. Teacher B, as an untrained teacher, was in the process of developing an understanding of TOC.

RQ3 To what extent do the teachers perceive that they are teaching according to TOC principles and to what extent are they actually teaching according to TOC principles? In terms of the degree of implementation, the conclusion from chapters 5 and 6 was that teacher A was exhibiting a high degree of implementation, with teachers B and C both exhibiting a lower degree of implementation than teacher A. There was some degree of congruence between their perceived degree of implementation and the actual degree of implementation as measured by the observation instrument.

RQ4 What strategies are the teachers using to implement TOC and what is the rationale for these strategies? The strategies used by the teachers involved principally an interface between their attitudes, their previous approaches and the requirements of the TOC innovation, as discussed in chapters 5 and 6 (see also 8.3.1). In chapter 7, I have provided detailed discussion of the strategies used to implement two of the main TOC concepts, task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences.

RQ5 What is the extent of change prompted by TOC? The introduction of TOC seemed to stimulate only minor changes amongst the three teachers in terms of teaching approach, mainly because TOC, to varying degrees, shared elements in common with their pre-existing approaches (5.2, 6.2). The process of marrying the requirements of TOC with elements of AA or communicative approaches seemed similar to the mutual adaptation approaches discussed in 2.4.2 and 8.4. The discussion in 8.3.1 indicates that a possible implication for educational reform is that a promising change strategy is for innovations to be better integrated with and differentiated from previous curriculum

approaches. On the basis of the two administrations of the attitude scale, the current study seemed to indicate that little attitude change took place over the period of the school year in which the research was undertaken. This provides further confirming evidence of the difficulties of changing teachers' attitudes (2.8.3).

RQ6 What are the facilitating and inhibiting factors in the management of change for TOC? This issue is discussed by applying the eight factors affecting curriculum innovation (2.8) to each of the cases to indicate the extent to which the factor facilitated or inhibited change. Some of the factors were found to be more central to the study than others.

i) With regard to *practicality* as indicated in 8.3.3, there is a high degree of congruence between the TOC approach and pre-existing classroom approaches for teachers A and C but not for teacher B whose favoured approach is more transmissive. For other elements of practicality, such as class sizes, school conditions and the appropriacy of TOC for the setting into which is introduced, there are no significant differences between the three teachers; as discussed in 2.8.1 and 3.8, there are a number of issues which impinge negatively on the practicality of TOC, e.g. large class sizes, school setting etc.

ii) In terms of *ownership*, as TOC was a centrally developed and administered innovation, there was little initial feeling of ownership amongst the three teachers. As teachers A and C perceived TOC to be commensurate with their own preferred approach, they may be considered to feel some ownership of the innovation. There was also evidence (5.2) that teachers were developing a personal interpretation of the innovation but this does not necessarily equate to ownership.

iii) With respect to teacher *attitudes*, (cf. RQ1 above) teacher A's positive beliefs towards TOC seemed to facilitate her high degree of implementation. For teacher B with a more neutral attitude towards TOC, there was a lower degree of implementation. The situation for teacher C was more complex in that her positive attitudes towards TOC were not translated into a high degree of implementation in view of the contextual issues discussed in 6.3.3.

iv) In terms of *teacher training*, as indicated in 5.2, teachers A and C were trained in the communicative approach so found it relatively easy to adapt to a task-based approach (3.8). Teacher B, in contrast, was in the process of being trained (5.2.3) so perhaps was more influenced by her own experiences as a learner in a traditional system. In-service teacher education for TOC was not studied in detail, although from the limited data obtained, no prominent differences between the three teachers were immediately apparent.

v) The *resources* for the three teachers seemed to be similar in that the main resources used by the three teachers were the commercially-produced TOC textbooks. Analysis of the use of resources was not emphasised in the study.

vi) *Communication* was discussed in 2.8.6 in terms of both central agencies to schools and school management to teachers. The first aspect is clearly comparable for all three teachers, whilst the role of school management was different in the three schools but did not appear to have as much impact on how TOC was implemented as the individual perspectives of the teachers themselves.

vii) In terms of *understanding*, teachers A and C had a sound understanding of TOC, whilst teacher B was still developing a theory of what TOC meant (5.2).

viii) With respect to *cultural appropriateness*, in 2.8.8 and 8.5 I have discussed both commonalities and mismatches between aspects of Chinese culture and the principles of TOC. From the evidence presented in 5.5, it seems that the teachers did not view this factor as being a significant impediment to TOC implementation. Considering these eight factors table 9.1 below summarises the three variables in which based on the discussion above, the teachers seem to differ the most.

Table 9.1 Key variables affecting curriculum implementation

	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C
Attitudes	positive	neutral	positive
Understandings	well-developed	developing	well-developed
Initial teacher training	completed	in process	completed

The main factors which affected the different implementation patterns were attitudes, teacher training and understanding, all very much “teacher-related” by which I mean that they are directly within the control and influence of the teachers. Teacher training perhaps seems less teacher-related in this sense, assuming that the outcomes of teacher training rest upon an interface between what is taught in the programme, what experiences participants have in schools during field experiences and what personal understanding and attitudes participants bring to the programme and develop during it.

RQ7 What are the implications for the management of change? Four themes were highlighted in 8.3 based on the teacher perceptions presented in 5.4. The main implications were the need to retain some continuity between different innovations in

order to avoid sudden changes in policy before previous reforms have had opportunity to bear fruit; that change should be neither too radical nor too rushed so as to allow teachers time and space to carry out incremental change; that practicality is enhanced by a degree of congruence with previous approaches; and that teachers need ongoing support during implementation.

9.3 Significance of study

The main significance of the study is in five areas: research methodology, contribution to the theory of educational change, *insights into task-based learning and perspectives on* catering for individual learner differences, and the discussion of the cultural appropriateness of TOC. By focusing on both change aspects and teaching aspects, the study meets Fullan's (1999) 'lesson' cited in 2.5 that theories of change and theories of education need to be harnessed together. In other words, the study has something to say about both the management of change aspects of TOC and also the innovation in the classroom with respect to task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences.

The study makes a contribution towards research strategies for analysing curriculum innovation. Through a case study approach, the thesis provides in-depth description and analysis of how teachers perceive and react to change. A further strength of the study is that it involves classroom observation and analysis of a corpus of fifty-one lessons, triangulated via interview and attitude data. By this direct observation of innovation in

the language classroom, the thesis covers an area which has been identified in the literature as being in need of further research.

With respect to the theory and practice of change, the study contains both descriptive and analytic data with respect to the change process. It has corroborated and/or extended knowledge about change as outlined in RQ7 above. In particular, the aspect of continuity or discontinuity claims to contribute to theory in an area that is of particular relevance in an era in which rapid change seems to be endemic (cf. Stokes, 1997, Morris 1999a). As indicated in 8.3.1, change agents and policy-makers seem to need to take better account of teachers' prior experiences in educational reform, so that schools can build on the past when attempting further improvements efforts. The study also provides empirical data to further explore facilitating and inhibiting factors in the management of change as discussed in 2.8 and outlined in 9.2 above. In this case, it provides empirical data to support the centrality of teacher-related factors in the management of change.

In addition, two significant issues in the implementation of TOC emerged from the classroom observation and interview data, namely task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences. From this observation, a number of insights can be developed into the teaching and learning of English in the Hong Kong primary classroom, with reference to TOC and its principal features. In particular, the data driven model of classroom implementation discussed in 8.6.2 contributes to the theory and practice of task-based learning in Hong Kong and, while it requires further research, may carry implications for primary EFL in other similar contexts. In 7.4, I also analysed the

methods which teachers were using to cater for individual learner differences. A variety of strategies, both explicit and more indirect ones, were used by the three teachers to provide individualised learning for their students.

The suitability of innovations for different contexts is an issue which is becoming increasingly important as globalisation spreads. The cultural appropriacy of TOC for the Hong Kong context is critiqued in 8.5, indicating that there were aspects of TOC which rendered it somewhat incongruent with local primary practices.

9.4 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study have been analysed in the reflections on the research methodology in 8.7.1 and also discussed in chapter 4. In short, I have identified some limitations in the selection of informants (4.3.7, 4.3.9); an emphasis on the qualitative data at the expense of detailed discussion of the quantitative data (8.7.6); and the case study approach limits the potential for generalisability of findings beyond the teachers which it analyses (4.3.5). As a primarily qualitative study the researcher himself, in this case a Western male trained in communicative approaches to language teaching, is unavoidably implicated in the study. In a qualitative study, the researchers insights are a key instrument of analysis, described by Lincoln & Guba (1985) as 'human as instrument'. As such the possibility of researcher biases is real and has been discussed in 4.3.10.

The study explicitly focused on the teacher perspective on change, for the reasons outlined in chapters 2 and 4. The pupils are of course, the other crucial element and how TOC impacted on them was not a primary focus of the study and was not discussed in any detail (see also below).

9.5 Suggestions for further research

Finally, I would like to outline some issues which the current study is not able to resolve and so point the way for further research. The following research areas or questions require further investigation:

- i) What is the pupil perspective on TOC? Do they enjoy learning more under TOC in comparison with previous approaches? How do the learning outcomes compare between TOC and previous approaches?
- ii) In terms of the implications for change discussed in 8.3, how does continuity and discontinuity in education change impact on a wider sample of teachers? What strategies can be used to undertake change for improvement without seeming to discard previous good practices?
- iii) How would a wider sample of school principals, teachers, teacher educators and other academic staff perceive the cultural issues which relate to TOC in Hong Kong?
- iv) Do the classroom implementation issues in task-based learning (7.3, 8.6) represent the classroom practices of other teachers or would different issues emerge? Would the model of task-based learning presented in 8.6 remain valid for a wider sample of teachers? What are the practical implications for teaching?

- v) In terms of catering for individual learner differences (7.4), what other strategies do teachers adopt to cope with the individual differences in their pupils and which strategies appear to be the most effective ones? What are the practical implications for teaching?
- vi) How does the use of the mother tongue facilitate or hinder what goes on in the classroom? What are the impacts of code mixing and switching as seen in teacher B's classes?

9.6 Envoi

The originality of this thesis lies principally in its analysis of both management of change and classroom implementation aspects of a curriculum innovation, through detailed interview and classroom observation data. It contributes to the literature by analysing what teachers are doing in the classroom and why and linking the discussion to teachers' prior beliefs and their experiences with previous innovations in the Hong Kong context. The significance and implications of the study encompass: insights into research methodology derived from the mixed method design of the study; confirmation and development of the theory of the management of change, in particular the implication that innovations should explicitly build on the outcomes of previous reform initiatives; insights into the classroom implementation of the key TOC classroom principles, task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences; and the implication that attention should be paid to the the cultural appropriateness of an innovation for a given context.

NOTES

¹ Research, development and diffusion models are based on the following stages as stated in Havelock (1971). Firstly, research is carried out by a team of experts; this is followed by the development and testing of prototypes; in the educational sphere this is likely to be teaching materials. The prototypes are tried and tested, feedback is collected, and this is followed by revision and refinement. In the final stage, the finalised product is disseminated to the user. The R, D and D has been extensively critiqued, mainly because it emphasises curriculum development issues at the expense of implementation ones (Milstein, 1982). For example, Clark, (1987) points out that R, D and D models ignore specific individual characteristics of different contexts; emphasise outcomes rather than process; and are unidirectionally top-down and transmissive, inhibiting the development of ownership from teachers. Markee (1997) also points out that these models take insufficient account of teacher attitudes. TOC development was along R, D and D lines as noted in 3.5.3.

² I was seconded to the TOC teacher education section from July 1993 to January 1994 and was one of the lecturers / facilitators for these workshops. I was also involved in the preparation and delivery of the mass centralised seminars.

³ On July 1st 1997, the colonial British government was succeeded by a new administration of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China. The new administration wished to establish its own policies so as to distinguish itself clearly from its colonial predecessor (Scott, 2000). TOC was generally perceived to have been an initiative of the previous regime and so it became something of a political necessity *for the SAR to launch new educational policy initiatives*.

⁴ The collected data is available on request, if required for inspection.

⁵ Reliable quantitative data is not available to external bodies. A Hong Kong attainment test is carried out in P3 and P6 but the way the test is administered and marked is not consistent across schools and the results are not considered reliable (Chow, personal communication, 21/1/1999). This and other statistical data is confidential to the individual school and ED.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Summary of TOC Programme of Study

The Target-Oriented Curriculum Programme of Study for English Language (Key Stage 1 i.e. Primary 1-3) was published as Curriculum Development Council (1995). It was thus one of the main guidelines available to lower primary English teachers at the time of my research for this thesis. The document has the following contents, which mainly provides general information and advice for teachers:

Chapter 1	Introduction	1
	Mainly a summary of the contents of the volume.	
Chapter 2	Hierarchy of Learning Targets and Objectives	2
	Including general targets for each key stage and communicative functions for KS1. 15 Key stage 1 targets are listed including, for example, “To establish and maintain relationships and routines in carrying out classroom activities”; “To interpret and use simple given information through processes or activities such as labelling, matching, sequencing, describing, classifying; and to follow simple instructions”; “To give expression to one’s experience through activities, such as making illustrations of selected events and describing and/or providing captions for them”.	
Chapter 3	Learning objectives (KS1)	19
	These “learning objectives” are expressed in terms of lists of language items to be taught, articulated in terms of grammar and vocabulary. Required skills are described with respect to listening, speaking, reading and writing. A summary of appropriate learner strategies is also included.	
Chapter 4	Modules, Units, Tasks	31
	This section indicates the hierarchical organisation of modules, units and tasks. For example, the module ‘Using my five senses’ is divided into three units, ‘Introducing the five senses’, ‘Looking and seeing’ and ‘Hearing and listening’. The task described in section 7.2.3 of this thesis comes from the unit ‘Looking and seeing’.	
	This section of the document also contains two exemplar tasks with accompanying worksheets, although how teachers might prepare pupils to do the tasks is not elaborated.	
Chapter 5	Teaching and Learning	39
	This section contains general advice on teaching methods, strategies, task-based learning and catering for individual learner differences.	

Chapter 6 Assessment 47

This section contains general definitions of formative and summative assessment, followed by some examples of assessment tasks.

Chapter 7 Planning 69

This section outlines how groups of teachers in schools might collaborate and then provides a short sample scheme of work, including modules, units, tasks, key stage targets, language items and communicative functions, skills (e.g. speaking, listening) and references/resources.

Appendix 2

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR TOC IMPLEMENTATION

Date

Time

School

Year Level

Teacher

No. of pupils

Textbook and page no.

Observation No.

Topic

Classroom lay-out (sketched below on completed schedule)

Observation schedule (completion at 4 minute intervals)

The eight categories are labelled A-H as below. Next to each of these letters a number (or occasionally more than one number) is inserted based on the protocol on pages 333-338 and as shown in the sample in Appendix 3.

TIME	Activity	Participant organisation	Modality	Medium
4 mins	A	B	C	D
8 mins	A	B	C	D
12 mins	A	B	C	D
16 mins	A	B	C	D
20 mins	A	B	C	D
24 mins	A	B	C	D
28 mins	A	B	C	D
32 mins	A	B	C	D

TIME	Language medium	Language focus	TOC Features
4 mins	E	F	G
8 mins	E	F	G
12 mins	E	F	G
16 mins	E	F	G
20 mins	E	F	G
24 mins	E	F	G
28 mins	E	F	G
32 mins	E	F	G

H. To what extent did the lesson reflect TOC principles?

- 1 no evidence of TOC principles
- 2 limited evidence of TOC principles
- 3 clear evidence of TOC principles
- 4 widespread evidence of TOC principles

Protocol

A Activity

- A1 Teacher presentation
 - a) Direct teaching
 - b) Pre-activity teacher instructions or demonstration
- A2 Pair-work
- A3 Group-work
- A4 Written exercise
- A5 Creating own written language
- A6 Listening comprehension activity
 - a) tape
 - b) read by teacher
- A7 Dictation
- A8 Singing songs
- A9 Pupils writing on blackboard
- A10 Copying from blackboard
- A11 Drawing or colouring
- A12 Language game
- A13 Administrative matter
- A14 Pupil oral presentation
- A15 Video
- A16 Others (specify)

B Participant organisation

- B1 T ---> Ps (whole class)
- B2 T ---> Ps (small group)
- B3 T ---> P (individual)
- B4 P ---> P
- B5 P ---> Ps
- B6 Ps ---> Ps
- B7 Individual work

C Student modality (skill area)

- C1 Listening
- C2 Speaking
- C3 Reading
- C4 Writing
- C5 All 4 skills Integrated
- C6 Drawing/Colouring
- C7 Other (specify)

D Medium

- D1 Teacher-generated
- D2 Textbook
- D3 Written text on blackboard
- D4 Worksheet
 - a) tailor-made
 - b) photocopy of published material
- D5 Audio
- D6 Video
- D7 Other (specify)

E Teacher language

- E1 Target language
- E2 Mother tongue
- E3 Mixed code

F Language focus

- F1 Form - Grammar (G), Vocabulary (V), Pronunciation (P)
- F2 Function
- F3 Meaning
- F4 Other (specify)

G TOC features

- G1 Active pupil participation
- G2 Language learning task
- G3 Catering for individual differences
- G4 TOC Assessment methods
- G5 TOC five fundamental ways of learning
- G6 Other (specify)

Reference notes for completion of observation schedule

On the basis of the piloting of the observation schedule (see 4.5), a number of issues in completing the schedule were identified. An aide-memoire of notes were compiled in order to assist in making a consistent judgement on such matters.

Notes for category A (Activity)

A1 - 'Teacher presentation' encompasses the teacher addressing the whole class as presentation of language items, drilling, question and answer, story-telling, giving feedback or other teaching methods not specified by other activity categories. A1b denotes a part of the lesson in which rather than direct teaching, the teacher is giving instructions or demonstration (on her own or assisted by pupils) on how to do an upcoming activity.

A4 - Written exercise denotes a manipulation or gap-filling exercise from a text-book or worksheet where pupils have no or minimal control over what should be written.

A5 - Creating own language contrasts with A4 in that pupils have some measure of control/input over what they are writing. Obviously, the teacher offers appropriate support but the pupil has some autonomy to create their own text e.g. writing a short poem from cues.

A11 - If drawing or colouring is the main focus of the activity, it will be included in this category even if there is also a small amount of labelling; if the writing element is more substantial e.g. pictures + sentences the activity would be denoted as A11/A4 or A11/A5.

A12 - Language game controlled by the teacher would be denoted A1/A12. Language game played in groups would be A3/A12.

A13 - Administrative or organisational matters may particularly occur at the beginning of classes, especially if the English teacher is also the class teacher. Such things as distributing letters for parents, briefing about trips, information on school procedures, disciplinary matters, collecting or returning exercise books. They may also occur occasionally mid-lesson e.g. public address announcement or message to individual pupil.

A14 - This category is intended to denote pupil or pupils addressing the class with some independence from the teacher (although the teacher may prompt, encourage and assist). For example, pupil presentation may occur in a post-task stage where pupils go to the front of the class and report back on something. (If the teacher is presenting, explaining or demonstrating and calls a pupil to the front to assist in the demonstration, this would be categorised as A1/A14.

Notes for category B (Participant organisation)

If two types of participant organisation occur simultaneously both are entered on the observation schedule e.g. during group work if the teacher is discussing with one group while other groups are discussing amongst themselves, the entry is B2/B6.

Notes for category C (Modality)

If two or more skills are being used simultaneously, both/all will be recorded e.g. Listening and Speaking C1/C2. C5 will be reserved for occasions when all four language skills are being used; e.g. during project work or in certain kinds of tasks or role-plays.

Notes for category D (Medium)

Medium refers to what the teacher is using to conduct the lesson. Category D1 includes pictures, realia, flashcards, sentence strips. Under D4 the distinction between a) and b) is made whenever possible, if this information is not available simply D4 will be entered.

Notes for category E (Language medium)

Mixed code refers to sentences which contain both languages e.g. a Cantonese sentence with English words or phrases embedded. In situations when there is code switching from E1 to E2 and vice versa but most utterances are one language or the other E1/E2 or E2/E1 will be used e.g. in pair or group work if some pupils are speaking in English and some in Cantonese. The first named language indicates the predominant one.

Notes for category F (Language focus)

When there are multiple language foci, all are listed on the observation schedule.

Notes for category G (TOC features)

TOC features are identified as Low (L), Medium (M) or High (H), according to the criteria below e.g. G1M indicates a medium level of pupil participation; G3H would indicate a high degree of catering for individual differences, G5 INQ M denotes medium inquiring in the five fundamental ways of learning etc. (In view of the specific focus in chapters 6 and 7 of the thesis on task-based learning in TOC, data analysis of category G was principally of aspect G2).

G1 Active pupil participation

In 3.6.1, I noted that TOC stresses the importance of pupils actively constructing or using knowledge. ED (1994a) indicates that implications for the classroom include:

- students should be actively engaged in tasks in which they discover, construct or use knowledge
- students should be encouraged to interact with the teacher and other students in pair work or group work.

Descriptors

Low: In the target language, there is little active pupil participation; there is little or no opportunity for them to create their own language; there is little or no teacher-pupil or pupil-pupil communicative interaction; there is little or no evidence of pupils actively constructing knowledge.

Medium: In the target language, there is some active pupil participation; there is some opportunity for them to create their own language; there is some genuine teacher-pupil or pupil-pupil interaction; there is at least some evidence of pupils actively constructing knowledge.

High: In the target language, there is widespread active pupil participation; there are opportunities for them to create their own language; there is clear evidence of teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction; there is clear evidence of pupils actively constructing knowledge.

G2 Learning tasks

The TOC definition of a learning task and the exercise-task continuum is discussed in 3.6.3.

Descriptors

Low: Learning exercises are primarily focused on the discrete practice of skills or sub-skills, usually in the absence of any context or real-life purpose beyond the practice of the given language items. Examples would be decontextualised grammar practice exercises, or structure drills in which there is only a subordinate focus on meaning.

Medium: Learning exercises or tasks tend to have some characteristics of both the ‘low’ and ‘high’ ends of the continuum. For example, they may involve the discrete practice of skills within a context or they may involve an information gap or exchange but in a relatively non-purposeful and non-contextualised way.

High: Learning involves a task with a clearly defined purpose that relates to authentic real-life use of the language, with a clearly defined real, imaginary or simulated context. Surveys, information gap or information exchange within a specified context might be example of such tasks. ‘High’ tasks may also provide for divergent outcomes qualitatively or quantitatively.

G3 Catering for learner differences

Catering for individual learner differences is discussed in 3.6.4. In the TOC documentation, three methods of differentiation are highlighted: students do the same exercise or task but with varied input or support; additional support for less able students; and graded exercise/tasks to suit different learning styles or abilities.

Descriptors

Low: There is little or no evidence of catering for individual differences.

Medium: There is some evidence of catering for individual differences, for example, the activity has open-ended characteristics which may allow pupils to respond in quantity and/or quality at their own individual level.

High: There is widespread evidence of catering for individual differences, for example; an activity has been specifically designed in order to allow for different learning abilities or styles.

G4 TOC Assessment Methods

TOC assessment is discussed in 3.6.5.

Descriptors

Low - no evidence of TOC Assessment principles

Medium - some evidence of TOC Assessment principles

High - widespread evidence of TOC Assessment principles

G5 Five Fundamental ways of learning

The five fundamental ways of learning were summarised in 3.6.6 and the following are examples for the subject of English of how they five fundamental ways of learning may be manifested. (These are examples, they are not intended to be exhaustive or mutually exclusive).

Communicating (COM): Information gap or opinion gap activities, responses to referential questions, own created written language.

Inquiring (INQ): Doing a survey e.g. asking classmates about their hobbies.

Conceptualising (CON): Making hypotheses or drawing conclusions about grammatical forms.

Reasoning (REA): Suggesting an ending to a story or putting sections of the story into the correct sequence.

Problem-solving (PROB): Deciding how best to spend a given budget e.g. choosing items of food from a restaurant menu.

Descriptors

Low: little or no evidence of this feature

Medium: some evidence of this feature

High: widespread evidence of this feature

(Some reflections on the difficulties of identifying and differentiating the five fundamental ways of learning are included in 3.6.7 and 8.7.1).

Criteria for category H - assessing the extent of TOC principles.

no evidence: traditional* lesson; no TOC features observable e.g. a teacher-centred lesson with emphasis on drilling, choral repetition, *focus largely on form*; no pair or group activities; any writing strictly controlled as per A4.

limited evidence: most of the lesson is informed by traditionalism* but there is at least some evidence of one of the TOC principles; e.g. there may be active participation of pupils within teacher controlled practice.

clear evidence: at least one TOC feature is reasonably prominent, for example occurring at more than one time unit in the lesson; overall the lesson seems to be informed by TOC principles.

widespread evidence: two or more TOC features are clearly observable during the lesson or one feature represents the primary focus of the lesson e.g. the lesson revolves around a task; overall the lesson is clearly informed by TOC principles.

*The definition of traditionalism derives from Nunan & Lamb (1996); the role of the teacher is characterised as “central and active; teacher-dominated method. Provides model; controls direction and pace” (p.14) . Activities mentioned are “dialogues and drills; repetition and memorisation: pattern practice” (p.15).

(As noted in 4.5.4.2, the application of these criteria involve a degree of subjectivity and individual judgement. The incorporation of more quantitative criteria, in terms of phrases, such as, “25% of the lesson ..” were rejected as it was considered a holistic judgment was more trustworthy than the ‘false objectivity’ provided by such quantitative measures).

Appendix 3 Sample completed classroom observation schedule

Below is a completed observation schedule for the sixth lesson of the first observation cycle for teacher C. This lesson has been discussed in 6.2.4.2 and transcript 6.4. Codes and abbreviations are as per Appendix 2 above.

TIME	Activity	Participant organisation	Modality	Medium
4 mins	A 1a	B 1	C 1, 2, 3	D 2
8 mins	A 1a	B 1	C 1, 2, 3	D 2, 3
12 mins	A 1a	B 1	C 1, 2	D 7#
16 mins	A 1a	B 1	C 1, 2	D 7#
20 mins	A 1b	B 1	C 1, 2	D 7#
24 mins	A 16*	B 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	C 1, 2	D 7#
28 mins	A 16*	B 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	C 1, 2	D 7#
32 mins	A 1a	B 1	C 1, 2, 3	D 2

TIME	Language medium	Language focus	TOC Features
4 mins	E 1	F 1(G), 1(V)	G 0 (i.e low - L)
8 mins	E 1	F 1(G), 1(V)	G 0
12 mins	E 1	F 1(G), 1(V), 3	G 0
16 mins	E 1	F 1(G), 1(V), 3	G 0
20 mins	E 1	F 1(G), 1(V), 3	G 0
24 mins	E 1, 2, 3	F 3	G 1H, 2H, 3M, 5 COM H, 5 INQ H
28 mins	E 1, 2, 3	F 3	G 1H, 2H, 3M, 5 COM H, 5 INQ H
32 mins	E 1	F 1(G), 1(V)	G

* 'Mingling' activity; # realia – family photos of teacher and then pupils

H. To what extent did the lesson reflect TOC principles?

- 1 no evidence of TOC principles
- 2 limited evidence of TOC principles
- 3 clear evidence of TOC principles**
- 4 widespread evidence of TOC principles

Appendix 4 Quantitative data (categories A and B)

The data in this appendix is obtained by tallying the entries from categories A and B of the classroom observation schedule (4.5.4 and Appendix 2) and expressing them as percentages. Despite the relative crudeness, loss of detail and false objectivity in this kind of tallying (4.5.2, 8.7.6), the data provides quantitative evidence to support the mainly qualitative discussion in chapters 6 and 7.

Appendix table 4.1 Summary of activities across cycles (teacher A)

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cumulative
direct teaching	34%	40%	33%	36%
pre-activity	5%	10%	6%	7%
group-work	3%	10%	3%	5%
language game	12%	-	5%	6%
pair work	-	4%	3%	2%
written exercise	3%	23%	3%	10%
singing songs	10%	-	1%	4%
creating written language	6%	5%	3%	5%
pupils writing on b/b	-	1%	-	-
pupil oral presentation	-	3%	5%	3%
drawing or colouring	13%	-	-	4%
other (cutting/sticking)	-	-	5%	2%
listening to tape	-	-	15%	5%
administrative matter	14%	3%	18%	12%

Appendix table 4.2 Participant organisation across cycles (teacher A)

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cumulative
T → Pupils (whole class)	47%	51 %	56%	51%
T → Ps (small gp)	2 %	4%	4%	3%
T → P (individual)	9%	7%	12%	9%
P → P	5%	8%	7%	7%
P → Ps	5%	6%	5%	5%
Ps → Ps	17 %	6%	1%	8%
Individual work	15%	18%	15%	16%

Appendix table 4.3 Summary of activities across cycles (teacher B)

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cumulative
direct teaching	82%	43%	56%	60%
pre-activity	7%	14%	11%	11%
group-work	-	-	13%	4%
language game	-	-	-	-
pair work	6%	4%	2%	4%
written exercise	-	5%	6%	4%
singing songs	-	-	-	-
creating written language	-	19%	-	6%
pupils writing on b/b	-	-	-	-
pupil oral presentation	-	10%	2%	4%
drawing or colouring	5%	-	2%	2%
other (pupil miming)	-	-	2%	1%
listening to tape	-	-	-	-
administrative matter	-	5%	6%	4%

Appendix table 4.4 Participant organisation across cycles (teacher B)

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cumulative
T → Pupils (whole class)	93%	69 %	67%	76%
T → Ps (small gp)	-	-	2%	1%
T → P (individual)	-	3%	5%	3%
P → P	-	-	2%	1%
P → Ps	7%	11%	3%	7%
Ps → P(s)	-	-	12%	4%
Individual work	-	17%	9%	9%

Appendix table 4.5 Summary of activities across cycles (teacher C)

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cumulative
direct teaching	48%	36%	54%	46%
pre-activity	5%	1%	-	2%
group-work	5%	8%	6%	6%
language game	5%	3%	-	3%
pupil oral presentation	-	10%	-	3%
written exercise	20%	6%	8%	11%
pupils writing on b/b	5%	-	3%	3%
creating written language	-	4%	-	1%
drawing or colouring	5%	21%	-	9%
listening to tape	2%	-	3%	2%
administrative matter	5%	11%	26%	14%

Appendix table 4.6 Participant organisation across cycles (teacher C)

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cumulative
T → Pupils (whole class)	65%	46%	74%	62%
T → Ps (small gp)	1%	4%	-	2%
T → P (individual)	7%	6%	12%	8%
P → P	1%	3%	2%	2%
P → Ps	3%	8%	2%	4%
Ps → Ps	1%	-	2%	1%
Individual work	22%	33%	8%	21%

Appendix 5 Sample lesson transcript

Below is an example of a lesson transcript from the second cycle for teacher A, discussed in 7.2.1 and transcript extract 7.1.

Transcription conventions:

T = Teacher

R = Researcher

LL = Group of learners choral

LLL = Whole class choral

L1, L2 etc = identified learner

[*in italics*] = commentary

... = pause

/ = overlapping speech

CAPITALISATION = emphasis

C-A-P-I-T-A-L-I-S-A-T-I-O-N = word spelt letter by letter

Text in this font = Chinese

[Background noise]

T: No more talking.

[Background noise]

T: What are you doing? Look at me. Sit. In this lesson, I prepared each group a plate of fruit. [*Pupils shouting in excitement*]

T: OK. You've learnt ... You've learnt apple. Look at me. Sit. ... Mickey, especially you. Don't move up. Move back. *You are moving too close. I am not feeling well. Do you know that?* ...

T: OK. You've learnt apple. Can you give me names of fruit you have learnt? Alan? Apple? Polly ... We've learnt apple ... and?

L1: Orange.

T: Orange. And? ... Alan?

L2: Banana.

T: Banana. And then we've learnt ... fruit ... I mean names of fruit. Yes?

L3: Lemon.

T: Lemon. Yes, we've learnt lemon, banana, apple, orange. Now we are going to learn some new things. Look at this.

LL: Mango/ Mango.

T: Yes, this is mango. Say mango.

LL: A Mango.

L4: Strawberry!

T: Listen. This is a strawberry.

LLL: Strawberry.

T: Say it again. I want to listen to you.

LLL: Strawberry.

T: Say it again. One, two, three ...

LLL: Strawberry.

T: Say it again. A strawberry.
 LLL: A strawberry.

T: This one. ... Look at me. Look at me ... Kiwi. This one is called ... a KIWI.
 LLL: A kiwi.

T: A kiwi.
 LLL: A kiwi.

T: And. Look at this one. This one is very small and ... look, Alan ...
 L5: Grape.

T: Yes. Grape.
 LLL: Grape.

T: Grape.
 LLL: Grape.

T: We say grape. It's grape. And I brought ... This one is called a cake.
 LL: A cake/ a cake.

T: This one is ...
 LL: Cookie!/ cookie!

T: Yes. Cookie.
 LL: Cookie!/ cookie!

T: Look at the blackboard. Sit down. Look at the blackboard ... Look at me ... Go back. Go back one space ... Sssh ... Look at the blackboard. Try to spell mango?
 LL: M-O ...

T: Man, Man, Man, ... M-A-N ... G-O.
 LL: Go. /G-O.

T: Go. Try to spell Kiwi? KIWI.
 LL: ... K/K-E

T: K. No, no no. Not -E-
 LL: K-I /K-I

T: K-I. WI.
 LL: WI/ WI.

T: WI, WI, WI. Danny. I asked you to sit here. Don't give me noise. I ask you to sit here ... Okay. K-I KI. And then WI, WI. KIWI.

LLL: Kiwi.

T: Look at the blackboard. Kiwi.
 LLL: Kiwi.

T: A Kiwi.
 LLL: A Kiwi.

T: And then try to spell STRAWberry.
 LL: S-T-R-A-W

T: Berry. BER. BER.

LLL: B-E-R-R-Y

T: /R-R-Y. Say it again. A strawberry.
 LLL: A strawberry.

T: And then. Grape. Try to spell grape. Grape.
 LLL: G-R-A/O

T: Grape. A. Not O. Grape.
 LLL: G-R-A-P-E-R

T: No R. No R. Grape.
 LLL: Grape.

T: Then what is this? It is a...?
 LLL: Cake.

T: A cake. Try to spell cake.
 LLL: C-A-K-E!

T: /K-E Cake. And then this one. What is it?
 LL: [Noise] Cookie/ A cookie!

T: Cookie. Yes. Cookie. Do you remember this one? This is a ...?
 LL: Cookie.

T: No. [Background noise]. OK. Look at this. Look ... Sit ... OK. Look at this. Look at this ... Let's talk about spelling. Wan Kwok Leung is a good boy. Stand up. Close your eyes. I ask you to close your eyes. And then, what should I say? I should say ...
 LL: Ssss.

T: Yes. I should say SMELL this. And?
 LLL: N-E-R

T: N-E-R. And then I ask. Is it ...?
 LLL: Is it...?

T: I ask, is it nice? Is it a good smell? Nice. N-I-C-E, nice. Nice means good. Okay? Okay?
 L6: Okay!

T: Okay. Is it nice?
 LLL: Is it nice?

T: What mark should be it? How to say it in English?
 L7: A question.

T: Yes. Question mark. Question mark. Is it nice? And then ... smell this. [The teacher allows some pupils to smell the fruits] Is it nice? Is it nice? Is it nice? ... She said no, it isn't. No, it isn't. [The teacher writes on the blackboard]. But I let ... Telly, It's a good try. Tell me, is it nice?
 L8: [Inaudible]

T: No, it isn't. Of course I choose good trial. Polly. It is a good trial. Is it nice? No? Polly.
 L9: *I want to try it too.*

T: No, is it nice? Ah, Hong Yiu Hing. It's nice. Yes, it is ... Sssh ... If you are noisy, I won't let you try. Is it nice?
 L10: Yes.

T: Ah. Terry and Polly think it is nice. They said yes, it is. One more, only one more. Samuel. Come up. OK, is it nice?

L11: [Inaudible]

T: Yes! He also thinks it is nice. Gloria and Michael think it is not nice. Is it nice? No, it isn't. But sometimes we may say yes, it is.

LLL: It is.

T: Good. And then I should say what is it?

LLL: /Is it?

T: What is it? It is ... a kiwi. It's kiwi.

L12: *Isn't it an apple?*

T: It's half a kiwi only. It's kiwi. It's kiwi.

L13: ... It's a mango. It's a mango.

T: No mango. A mango. Look, a mango. Flamingo is another thing. Flamingo. *Those red birds*

LLL: [Noise]

T: OK ... Who want to be the questioner? OK. Who wants to be the questioner. Smell this ... em ... Matthew ... And then, listen. Who want to be the guesser? Guess the fruit. Guess the fruit ... em ... Steven ... [Background noise] ... Put your hand on your mouth ...

LL: [Giggles]

T: *If you do not sit well, you have to give me your handbook. I will tell your mom. Are you going to be like that? I will play this again during lunchtime. If you do not behave ... If you do not behave, you will not be able to play it....* You are the questioner. OK. You ask ... [Background noise]

L14: Smell this. Is it nice? ... What is it?

L15: Kiwi

L16: KIWI!

T: OK.

L17: KIWI?

T: OK. Kiwi.

LLL: Kiwi.

T: Say it. It's kiwi.

LLL: It's kiwi.

T: OK. *All of you, move back two steps. All of you ...* [Pupils moving] ... OK ... Who want to be the questioner? ... OK, Gordon... [Background noise] ... Who wants to be the guesser?

L18: *We are monkeys.*

T: Daniel, you stand there. I don't like your behavior. You always shout out. I don't like people shouting. *Who else is shouting? I found the discipline is very bad in this lesson. Then I won't do anything if you are behaving like that. Why is it like that? I saw another student. Cheng Yi Chun ...* OK ... OK, Vivian, you are the guesser.

L19: ...

L20: Yes.
 L21: ... Cookie

L22: Yeah!! Cookie.

T: One more. The last one. ... [Background noise]. This time, Gloria, the questioner ... Joyce, you are the guesser ... [background noise] OK. Ask her ... listen, listen. [Laughter]

L23: Close your eyes. ... What is this?
 L24: It's a cake.

T: Is it a cake?
 LLL: YES!

T: No one choose strawberry. No one choose mango. Let ... Hmm ... let me choose one more. You must choose strawberry or mango. Em ... Jonathan Lam. Eh ... Matthew, you are the guesser. [Background laughter] ... Alan, stand there... Use your hands, cover your eyes.
 L25: [Laughs]

T: Joyce. Strawberry or mango. [Background noise] ... Good.
 L26: Is it nice?

T: Is it nice? Yes or no. [Background noise] ... It's a mango or strawberry?
 L27: Strawberry.

LLL: YES! /YES!

T: Sssh ... I let him choose. *I let him choose*. Mango or strawberry? All go back. Listen. Only one, three, five. Do the guesser game. I give you a plate and you ... Group 4 and Group 2 ... em ... I give you some exercise books to do. Do your grammar book or worksheet first.

L28: *Change*

T: *Yes. Change*. OK. Go back to your group. *The best group...* ... [Background noise] .
 L29: What is this? [Background noise]

[Pupils carry out the activities in their groups]

T: Go back to your seat. [Background noise] Hey, Look at me. Look at me. Look at me Paul. I forgot to talk ... Sit down ... Look at me ... Yes good ... Gloria ... Andrea is so good. What about you, Gloria?... Usually we ask is it nice then you may answer yes, it's nice or ..
 L30: No.

T: Now, I let you ... some of you smell something which is not nice. It has a bad smell.
 LLL: AH!/AH! *Shoe polish!*

T: Look. This one is called ... you know the Chinese.
 L31: *Shoe polish*

T: But... in English. Holly, try to tell us what is it in English.
 L32: Shoe polish.

T: Shoe polish. Shoe Polish.

LLL: Shoe polish.

T: It's shoe polish.
 LLL: It's shoe polish./Shoe polish

T: You also say it's. It's shoe polish.
 LLL: It's shoe polish.

T: OK. I let some of you smell it.
 LL: Ah! No. *It smells bad*

T: Sssh ... I will see who's a good child and let him or her smell it...
 LL: I like/ I like.

T: Is it nice? ... No, it isn't.
 L33: No, it isn't.

T: Is it nice? [Pause] and ... Is it nice? Is it nice? Is it nice?
 L34: *I want to smell it!*

T: Is it nice?
 L35: *It smells bad.*

T: Is it nice? Is it nice? Is it nice? ...
 L36: Yes, it is.

T: It's very nice.
 LL: Errr!/[Laughter. background noise]

T: [Inaudible] Talk. Keep telling lies. Is it nice?
 L37: ...

T: Yes? ... You naughty boy. Is it nice?
 LL: [Laughter]

T: Sssh ... Listen. Listen, when you are playing the guessing game, *Some classmates will give you this.*
 LL: [Screams of excitement]

T: This is soap.
 LL: Soap.

T: Say IT'S SOAP.
 LL: It's soap. Soap/ soap.

T: Sssh ... Who's talking now? Who is talking now? ... I don't like this smell. I hate this smell ... Who can be a good boy or good girl? I like ... some of you ... I ask you if it is nice. Do you think it is nice? Jenny, is it nice? Smell this ... Is it nice?
 L38: Yes. [Background noise]

T: But I don't like this kind of ... soap, a piece of soap.
 L39: Soap.

T: Soap, *soap*
 L40: *Soap? It smells so nice.*

T: Is it nice? ... Yes? You also say yes? OK. Is it nice? Yes, yes. How about Michael? Smell this. Is it nice?
 L41: Yes!

T: Ah, Michael and I [Teacher writes on blackboard] think that it is nice. I ask you to be good ...
 L42: No!

T: And then... Is it nice? Is it nice?

L43: Yes.

T: Vivian, is it nice? ... Ah, Terry, Michael and I think it is not nice ... Is it nice? [Noise] ... Sssh ... Look at the blackboard. All of you, look at the blackboard. OK?
What is this?

LLL: What is this? ... Yes, it is.

T: Or?

LLL: No, it isn't. What is it? It's ...

T: It's kiwi

LLL: It's kiwi.

T: It's kiwi.

LLL: It's kiwi.

T: It's cake.

LLL: It's cake.

T: It's a mango.

LLL: It's a mango.

T: It's strawberry.

LLL: It's strawberry.

T: It's grape.

LLL: It's grape.

T: Alright. Fruit. [Inaudible] ... OK ... Sssh. OK. So you ask where is ... [Loudly] Sit down ... Say it in English ... Smell this.

L44: What is this? [Background noise]

LL: *It's my turn!* ... [Background noise]

T: Smell this. Try...

[Background noise]

L45: Strawberry ...

[Background noise]

L46: Mango! ... [Background noise] ... *It tastes good!* ...

[Background noise and laughter]

L47: It's nice! [Background noise]

T: OK. I say one, two, three and you stop.

T: One ... two ... three ... stop ... STOP ... Please give the plate back to me. Give the plate back to me. Give the plate back to me ... Give the plate ... OK. OK. Sssh ... Group 2 and Group 4. Close your working.. Close your working. Close your working ...

L48: Mango.

[Background noise]

T: Raymond ... [Inaudible]

R: [To individual pupil] Sit down ... [Background noise]

L49: Close your eyes.

L50: Close your eyes. What is this? ...

L51: Close your eye ... Close your eyes ... [Laughter]

R: [To individual pupil]. Be careful. [Background noise]

L52: ... Is it?

R: [To individual pupil]. Tape recorder...

L53: Smell this ... Close your eyes.

L54: Yes!

L55: Is it nice?

L56: Yes.

L57: What is it?

[Background noise]

T: One ... Two ...

L58: Three.

T: Three ... OK. Stop. Give the plate. All the plates ... to me. Stop. I said stop already.

LL: [Noise]

T: Don't play ... Kevin, Michael, sssh ... Today I like Group 2, Group 2.

L: No.

T: No?

L59: I like Group 3.

T: ... All of you, put down your pencils. Put down your pencils. Look at the blackboard. Straight. Sit straight ... look at the blackboard. I say one, two, three, put down your pencils. Go home and do it. Today you will have to copy it later. Don't copy it now. Do workbook or worksheet book. You tell me.

L60: Worksheet

T: Worksheet ... And copy book. Page 6. Don't copy it now. *Don't do it now*. Don't copy it now ... Look at me. Look at me. Look at me ... Today ... Look at me, look at the blackboard. Today Group 1 is very good. Put down your pencils. Put your pencils down. Group 5, Alex, yes, put down your pencils. Look at me. Group 4 ... good. Ah, Daniel ... OK, OK ... Joyce ... Tommy ... What is it? ... What is it? *What is it called?* Some kind of toy. OK. Look at the blackboard.

LL: ...

T: A mango. [Teacher writes on the blackboard]

LLL: A mango. Kiwi. Strawberry. Grape.

T: And ... what is it?

LLL: Orange!

T: Yes, it's an orange. How do you spell orange?

LLL: O-R-A-N-G-E orange

T: And ... Ah ... Group 1 is good. I let group one touch it. Touch it. You use your hand to TOUCH the orange. Ah ... Is it rough or smooth? Rough or smooth?

LL: Smooth.

T: And then you touch it...

LL: /rough.

T: Is it rough or smooth?

L61: /rough.

T: Say it's rough.

L62: Rough.

T: And then, let Samuel touch it...

L63: Rough.

T: Is it smooth or rough?

L64: Rough.

T: Yes, rough also. Good ... And then ... Look at this. What is this?

LL: An apple/apple.

T: Look at me. When you touch it ... let me see. When the group is good, I'll let the group touch the apple. OK. You can touch it. When you touch it, you can feel it: rough or smooth ... Group 4, touch it ... touch it ... OK. Touch it. It's rough? Or smooth?

L65: *[Inaudible]*

T: ... It is smooth ... so ... now I draw a table. When you touch an apple, an apple ... it is smooth or rough?

LLL: Smooth!

T: How do you spell smooth? Smooth?

LLL: S-M/

T: /M-O-O-T-H smooth. Pass it. Pass it to your friends. And then ... Is it hard or soft? Is it hard or soft?

L66: Hard.

L67: HARD!

T: Yes. An apple. When you touch it. It's hard or soft?

L68: Soft.

T: You think it's soft. OK ... You come out. Jeff, you come out. Tell me, tell me, hard or soft? Hard or soft?

L69: Hard.

T: It's hard.

L70: It's hard.

T: Yes. It's hard ... Ah ... How do you spell hard?

LLL: H...

T: /H-A-R-D. Give me back. Give me back please. And then, when you ... I draw your nose ... *[Laughter]*

T: When you smell an apple, it is nice?

LLL: Yes, it is!

T: So. It's nice. We say ... listen, it has nice smell. It has nice smell. And then, when you ... ah ... touch it ... you smell it ... This is your tongue ...

[Laughter]

T: This is your tongue. When you taste it, what is the taste? What is the taste?

L71: Bitter.

L72: Yummy, Yummy.

T: And a ... Sweet... How do you ... How do you spell sweet?

LLL: S-W-E-E-T/

T: S-W-E-E-T. Sometimes, apples may be sweet and

L73: Sour.

T: Yes. Sweet and ... sour ... OK. And then, when you look at it. What colour is it? These are your big, big eyes.

LL: Ah! [Excitement, laughter]

T: So you look at it. What colour is an apple?

L74: Red.

T: How do you spell red.

LLL: R-E-D.

T: So, I can write a riddle *A riddle, a riddle*, about an apple. I would say, it is smooth, then ... how should I join them? Smooth ... and ... yes ...

LL: Hard/hard

T: And here I should put a ...

LL: Stop/ Full stop.

T: Full stop. It has a nice [Teacher writes on blackboard]...

L75: Smell.

T: Yes. It has a nice smell. Look at this. OK. Put together. It has a nice smell.

LLL: It has a nice smell.

T: It's shoe polish. Does it has a nice smell?

LLL: Yes!/No!

T: Put it here. Put it here. Go and wash your hands. So it ... it does not have a nice smell. For an apple, it has a nice smell. And then, it is ... sweet ... and sour. It is ... red. OK. After I finish, *Write it in your exercise book in a minute. Turn it around.* Turn the book over and ... you write the answer there.

L76: [Inaudible]

T: Yes.

L77: Apple.

T: After you write the riddle, you let your friend. Look at it, Willy. *Show it to your friend and see if he/she can guess it.* I give you a worksheet first.

L78: Worksheet. Worksheet.

T: What colour is this?

LL: White/white.

T: Here write down your name ... It's a worksheet ... *[Background noise]* ... Do you have one?

T: Today is the 21st, 21st ... Look at the board *[Teacher taps on the blackboard]* ... 21st of March, 1997. Now, choose three kinds of fruit that you like. For example, I like kiwi, so I draw a kiwi. I like ...

L79: Cookie.

T: Grape. So I like piece of grape. I like strawberry so I draw a strawberry. Edmond?

L80: I like...

T: I put the plate in you book. *I give the plate back to you. If you don't remember.* So you can touch it. OK. You can touch it. Look at me. You touch it when you forget it is smooth or rough. When you forget the kiwi is smooth or rough you can touch it.... Here are some apples and oranges. If you forget it is rough or smooth, you can come out and touch it. Do number 1 first. *Everyone may pick three different ones.*

L81: Mango.

L82: Orange.

T: Orange is hard or soft? I want to know.

L83: Soft ...

T: Can anyone answer me? An orange is soft or hard?

LL: Hard/hard.

T: Rough or smooth?

LL: ...

T: If you don't know the word, there are some words at the bottom to help.

LL: *[Background noise]* ...

T: But when you touch an orange, how does it feel?

L84: Rough.

R: Good job.

L85: I don't know.

[Background noise]

L86: Apple.

T: OK. Be nice ... Listen, listen. *Now you have to write here two words, like the example I gave you.*

L87: Rough and hard.

[Background noise]

T: You may talk about lemon...

L88: Orange.

L89: Banana.

[Background noise. Some action going on]

T: How many have you written down? ... Three riddles ... Part B. Look at Part B. Part B. An example. I choose an example for you so you understand. In your G.E. [*General English exercise book*]. Write two riddles, but don't copy. In your G.E. write two riddles. *Write your own creations*. Look at the blackboard. Raymond ... James ... Smell nice or not nice ...

[*Background noise*]

T: Very good...

[*Background noise*]

T: What are you doing? Have you finished your table? ... It is ... *It is a riddle...*

L90: *Make a riddle ourselves... make a riddles ourselves...*

T: STOP. All of you ... stop. Let me explain. Let me explain. You have to fill in the table. For example, number 1 ... Erm ... Number 1. Look at the table. Look at the table. Who has finished the table? Put up your hand ... *Who knows how to fill in this table? Put up your hand*. You know how to fill in this table. OK. *Some of you are not very clear, I will explain again*. Look at me. Look at me. Put down your pencils I said. [*Pupils put down their pencils*]

L91: Put down your pencils?

T: Jennifer... For example, number 1. I choose Kiwi so I have to draw a kiwi here. Understand? And then I spell kiwi. Spell kiwi.

LL: K-I-W-I.

T: /K-I-W-I. And then you when touch the kiwi, you feel rough or smooth?

LL: Rough/rough.

T: So, you write down rough here. R-O-U-G-H. OK? Jeff, sit down. And the kiwi is soft or hard? When you touch the kiwi, it is soft or hard?

LL: Soft/soft.

T: It's soft or it's hard?

LL: Hard/hard.

T: Yes. Jonathan. Is it soft or hard? A Kiwi.

L92: ...

T: You think it's hard. But you touch it. You guess the kiwi. Soft or hard? Hard? ... But ... it is soft. You touch it ... it is soft. And then, you smell it. Gloria, look at me. LOOK at me. Then smell, you feel it ... Nice or not nice? You think it's nice, then you fill in nice. Write down nice. If you think it's not nice, so you write not nice.

[*Pupils write riddles*]

Appendix 6

SAMPLE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The interviewing procedures for the study are described in 4.6. Interview schedules are an aide-memoire (rather than a straightjacket) and facilitate the coverage of major topics. Follow-up questions are asked where appropriate (see 4.6.4). Below is the schedule for one of the post-observation interviews.

Teaching aspects

I've watched 6 lessons over the past week or so, taking the lessons as a whole what areas were you satisfied with?

And what areas were you less satisfied with?

How satisfied were you with the pupil performance in the lesson? Explain why.

How typical were these lessons of your normal lessons?

What effect (if any) did my presence as an observer have on the lessons?

Were the pupils any different to normal?

Do you think you teach differently when I am/am not there? What differences?

Did you use the same amount of English that you usually use?

Overall, when I am not there, do you teach

very differently slightly differently about the same

TOC aspects

Do you think you taught differently in these lesson in comparison with your teaching last year before implementing TOC?

very different slightly differently about the same

What are you doing differently since doing TOC?

According to your understanding what are the main principles of TOC?

In these lesson did you think you were able to put these principles into operation?

Overall, in these lessons, did you think you were teaching according to TOC principles?

very much quite a lot to a certain extent not really not at all

Specific TOC aspects

How did you use Targets in these lessons?

In these lessons did you think you did any tasks?

Did you use TOC Assessment methods at all?

Did you cater for individual learner differences at all?

Were the pupils involved in the 5 fundamental ways of learning, i.e. communicating, conceptualising, reasoning, inquiring, problem-solving?

Did you feel that any elements of TOC caused you any difficulties in these lessons?

At this point are there any areas of TOC that you would like to develop in your teaching?

At this point in time, how would you describe your attitude towards TOC?

very positive positive undecided negative very negative

Future lessons

Can you tell me what you've done since the last lesson I observed?

Any particular TOC aspects planned? Any tasks planned?

Appendix 7






ATTITUDE SCALE

The letter denotes the teacher and the number the first or second administration of the attitude scale e.g. A1 = the response of teacher A to the first administration, B2 = the response of teacher B to the second administration etc. Asterisk denotes TOC orientation (4.7.3)

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNCERTAIN	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1. It is important for pupils to do dictations regularly			C1	A1, A2, B1, B2, C2	
2. The main role of the teacher is to transmit knowledge		A1	C2	A2, B1, B2, C1	
3. Making errors is a natural part of the learning process *		A1		A2, B1, B2	C1, C2
4. The teacher should be an authority figure in the classroom		C2	C1	A1, A2, B1, B2	
5. Pair/group work are useful teaching techniques *				A1, A2, B1, B2,C2	C1
6. TOC is impractical in Hong Kong schools		C2	B1, B2, C1	A1, A2	
7. The main role of the teacher is to facilitate learning amongst pupils *				A1, A2,	B1,B2, C1, C2
8. Explaining grammar rules is an important part of my teaching		A1,A2, C1, C2		B1, B2	
9. Pupils learn most when they are actively involved *				A1, A2, B1	C1, C2 B2
10. It is important to give pupils the opportunity to learn at their own pace *			B1	A1, A2, B2	C1, C2
11. Pupils learn through constructing their own grammar rules *			A1, B1, B2	A2	C1, C2
12. Under TOC pupils will learn more than before *			B1, B2	A1, A2 C1, C2	

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNCERTAIN	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
13. It is important for pupils to create their own sentences *			B1, B2	A1, A2	C1, C2
14. It is important to use a communicative approach to teaching*			A1	B1, B2, A2	C1, C2
15. Pupils learn most when listening to the teacher		A1, A2, C1		B1, B2, C2	
16. Traditional teaching is more effective than TOC teaching		A1, A2, C2	B1, B2, C1		
17. It is important for pupils to do language learning tasks *				A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2	
18. I support the principles of TOC *				A1, A2, B1, B2, C1	C2
19. It is important to complete the teaching syllabus		A1, A2, B1, C2	C1	B2	
20. I am now teaching according to TOC principles *				A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2	
21. It is necessary to correct all pupil errors	C2	C1, B2	B1	A1, A2	
22. Under TOC pupils will be less motivated than before	C1, C2	A1, A2, B2	B1		
23. It is important for pupils to know the rules of a language		C2	C1	A1, A2, B1, B2	
24. The teacher should take into account pupils' needs and interests *				A1, A2, B1	C1, C2, B2
25. Pair/group work leads to discipline problems.		C1	A1, A2, B1, C2	B2	
26. It is important to do all the exercises in the textbook.	C2	A1, A2, B1, B2, C1			

Fill in the table with suitable words.

Fruit	Touch	Smell	Taste	Colour
e.g.  lemon	 rough, hard	 nice	 sour	 yellow
1.				
2.				
3.				

Choose three kinds of fruit and write down their names.

Draw them in the boxes

These words may help you:

Rough \diamond smooth

hard \diamond soft

nice

sour/sweet

Red yellow

green

brown

A Fruit Riddle

- e.g. 1. It is rough. It has a nice smell. It is sour. It is yellow. What is it?
 2. It is smooth. It has a nice smell. It is sour and sweet. It is red.
 What is it?